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*COURT ROYAL.*

A STORY OF CROSS CURRENTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'JOHN HERRING,' 'MEHALAH,' ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

STOCK-TAKING.



JOANNA was given the letter by Mr. Worthivale, and walked through the park to Court Royal. The evergreen shrubs on both sides of the drive relieved the monotony of winter bleakness. The pines were clothed; of them there was great variety. The oak, though turned brown, was not divested of all its leaves. The day was fine and the air

mild. Joanna knew nothing of the country; she was surprised

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at and delighted with all she saw. She stood watching the fallow deer, till she was frightened by the rush past her, on wing, of a pheasant. The wood-pigeons were flying in hundreds from one beech clump to another, rejoicing over the fallen masts. The afternoon sun shone yellow over the front of Court Royal, making the windows glitter like sheets of gold leaf. Joanna went round to the back of the house, and delivered her letter and message. She was taken into the servants' hall, where some of the maids were receiving visitors from Kingsbridge, and stuffing them with veal pie, ham, tarts and clotted cream. They ate cream with their ham, heaped it on their bread, and jam on top of the cream equally deep; they drank it with their tea, and filled the cups with lump sugar till the lumps stood out of the tea like Ararat above the flood. Some of the servants' friends had brought their children with them; these over-ate themselves, were unwell, retired, and came back to repeat the process.

Joanna looked on in amazement. She was invited to take her place with the rest, but declined, as she had dined recently.

Then the housekeeper came in, smiled benevolently on the visitors, bade them enjoy themselves, and called Joanna away to see round the Court.

The housekeeper had been bred in the traditions of the knowledge and love and fear of the great Kingsbridge family. Her father had been a footman, her mother (a lady's maid in the service of the late Duke), who had married and kept the lodge. The first recollection of her infant mind was being noticed as a healthy, pretty child, by the late Dowager Duchess. She had been educated, gratis, at the school supported by his Grace, a school which had in its window the Ducal arms and supporters in stained glass, and outside, in the gable, the Ducal coronet and initials of Bevis, seventh Duke of Kingsbridge. At an early age she had served the family by opening the gates of the drive, and had worshipped the family with curtsies before she had been found old enough to go to church and worship God. Then she had been taken into the Court, and been a servant there all her life, first in one capacity, then in another, till she married the red-faced coachman, who wore a white wig and sat on a hammercloth emblazoned with the Ducal arms. Upon the death of the coachman, Mrs. Probus returned to the great house as housekeeper. It was unnecessary for her to do so. She had saved, during her

long service, a good deal of money. The pickings had been considerable. But the pickings were too considerable, the living too good, the work too light to be resigned hastily, and Mrs. Probus felt that it would be banishment to hyperborean night to be consigned to an almshouse for the rest of her days, away from the splendour of the Ducal system, illumined only by the flicker of consciousness that the almshouses had been founded for the reception of worn-out Ducal retainers. So, though Mrs. Probus often spoke of retiring, she postponed the evil day.

Her little sitting-room, into which she introduced Joanna, was furnished with memorials of the Eveleighs. Over the chimney-piece, of course, was the portrait of the present Duke; over the sideboard, the picture of the late Duke. On the cheffonier were the silver tea-kettle given her by the Duke on her marriage, and a silver salver with a long inscription, presented to the late lamented coachman on his completion of the fiftieth year of service. On all sides were presents—remembrances of the Dowager Duchess Anna Maria, of the late Duchess Sophia. On her bosom she bore a brooch containing the hair of the Marquess and Lady Grace, whom she had nursed as infants; and about her finger was a white ring woven of silver hair, cut from the head of Frederick Augustus, sixth Duke of Kingsbridge, Marquess of Saltcombe, Viscount Churchstowe, Baron Portlemouth, Baronet, Grand Commander of the Bath, Knight of the Garter, of Saint Patrick, of the Black Eagle, etc., etc., etc., cut off his head when she had laid him out for burial.

Mrs. Probus was proud to show the house to Joanna. When she learned that Joanna was the new servant come to the Lodge, she understood at once that she had been sent down there to be impressed, and Mrs. Probus was never happier than when stamping the Ducal family on young minds. A reverent fear and love of the family was the best preservative youth could have against the trials and temptations of life. It would save a girl from flightiness. Everyone who moved in the Kingsbridge system was respectable to the tips of little finger and little toe. Imprudence was impossible to one nurtured in the Kingsbridge atmosphere. When the butler heard of a young man who had taken to drinking and gone to the bad, 'Poor fellow,' he said, 'if only he could have been received as a stableboy here!' When the housekeeper was told of a young woman who had lost her character, 'How dreadful!' she exclaimed; 'would that she had been kitchen-maid

at Court Royal!’ As the monks and nuns of old believed that salvation was hardly possible outside the cloister, the domestics in the Kingsbridge constellation held that no one went to hell from Court Royal or Kingsbridge House, Piccadilly. The same feeling pervaded the entire estate. The tenants were steeped in it. They were all respectable; the farmers Conservative, churchgoers, and temperate; their wives clean and rosy-cheeked, attending to their dairies themselves, and curtseying like schoolgirls, and standing with their hands under their aprons, when visited by one of the family. The cottagers reared their children to abstain from evil and do that which is good, because there was a great Duke far above them who knew everything that went on upon his estates, and who, if the children were clean and respectful, would take them up into service in the Great House, and provide for them and make them happy for ever. No more moral, respectable, orderly, religious people were to be found in the West of England than those on the Kingsbridge estate; but all this morality, respectability, order, and religion rested on the foundation of the love and fear of the Duke. One Sunday, when the Rector’s wife was catechising the school children, she inquired who were ‘the elect people of God,’ whereupon they responded, as with one voice, ‘The tenants of the Duke, ma’am.’ And what they said, they believed.

Mrs. Probus took Joanna up the grand staircase, turning and glancing at her face at the landings, to see that the proper expression of wondering awe was there. She bade her look at the pictures, and narrated the hackneyed story of their acquisition on the Continent by the great Duke who was a general in the reign of George I. The keen eyes of the girl were in every corner, not on the pictures, which she did not understand, but on the cabinets, the Chinese vases, the pile carpet, the exotic ferns. In the state drawing-room she made a halt, and caught her breath.

‘O my goodness!’ she gasped; ‘the Chippendale!’

‘The *what*?’

‘The Chippendale!’ exclaimed Joanna. ‘What first quality chairs and tables and cabinets. Why, they are worth a pot of money, just now that the fashion runs on Chippendale.’

‘Of course the furniture is valuable,’ said Mrs. Probus with dignity. ‘But pray do not speak of it as though it were about to be sold at an auction.’

‘And the china!’ cried Joanna excitedly. ‘That pair of Sèvres



vases any dealer would give a hundred pounds for, and ask for them two hundred and fifty, and take two hundred.'

'No doubt the vases are precious. They were given to the late Duke by King Charles X. from the royal manufactory.'

'That nude figure of a woman seated on a dolphin is fine,' said Joanna. 'Oh, please may I look at the mark. Double C crowned—Ludwigsburg, modelled by Ringler. Look at the glaze. Observe the moulding!'

'It is scarcely delicate,' said Mrs. Probus.

'On the contrary, it is most delicate, and considering the delicacy in admirable condition. Only some of the flowers on the pedestal are chipped.'

'I did not allude to the fragility of the china, but to the impropriety of a lady going about with only a scarf over her. However, the subject must be right, or it would not be here.'

'Of course it is right,' said Joanna, excitedly. 'It is splendid; worth thirty pounds to a dealer, double to a purchaser. That is a pretty First Empire clock.'

'It don't go,' said Mrs. Probus.

'Who cares for that?' answered Joanna. 'The shape is the thing. The ornaments are very chaste. There you have some old Plymouth.'

'You seem to know a great deal about porcelain.'

'I do know something.'

'Ah, you ought to see the collection the Marquess has in his room. He is a fancier, and does not care what he pays to secure a piece to his taste.' The housekeeper was gratified at the enthusiasm and delight of the girl.

'May I—oh, may I see it?'

'Let me see—the Marquess has gone out. I think it would be possible, though not allowed. We may not show strangers over the private apartments inhabited by the family. Still, this is a different case; you are a servant, almost I may say, of the family, as you are in the house of the steward. Follow me through the dining-room. I must show you the Rubens and Ostades and Van Dycks, and the Murillo bought by the late Duke Frederick Augustus; he gave for it seven thousand pounds.'

Joanna sighed. 'I am ashamed to say I know nothing of the value of pictures. That requires a special education, which I have not had. It is a branch of the business—' She stopped abruptly, and then said, 'I dare say you have a catalogue of the

paintings, which you could let me have. I should so much like to know what you have here; what to admire. Then, on another occasion, I shall be better able to enter into the merits of the pictures. You see, ma'am, with so much that is wonderful about one, the mind becomes bewildered. I will not look at the paintings to-day, I will look only at the china and the furniture.'

'Certainly,' said the housekeeper, 'what you say is just. I will give you a printed catalogue—privately printed, you understand.'

'That is a magnificent inlaid Florentine cabinet,' said Joanna; 'worth a hundred guineas. Oh, what treasures you have here!'

'Treasures indeed,' said Mrs. Probus; 'you see their Graces the Dukes of Kingsbridge have always been patrons of art, and have collected beautiful things in their travels through Europe.'

'If only there were to be a sale here—'

'Sale!' exclaimed the housekeeper; 'good heavens above! What do you mean? Sale!—sale in a Ducal mansion! Young woman, restrain your tongue. The word is indecent.'

She tossed her head, frowned, and walked forward stiffly, expressing disgust in every rustle of her silk gown and in the very creak of her shoes.

'I beg your pardon, ma'am. I was dazzled, and did not know what I was talking about.'

'Oh,' said Mrs. Probus, 'that alters the case. Now we are in the wing containing the private apartments. Here everything is more modern and comfortable. You admire the flowers I perceive. Yes, there are camellia and ferns in the corridor. If you like it, I will conduct you over the conservatories—not now—presently. His Grace sets great store on the green-houses and the winter-garden.'

'Dear ma'am, I should so greatly like to see them. I love flowers above everything in the world. I have only five little pots at home, on the roof, and one of them contains a bit of wild heather I dug up with my scissors, on the rare occasion of a holiday. Now that I am away, I do not know who will attend to my poor plants, and whether I shall find them alive when I return. I have no one in the world whom I can ask to do a thing for me.'

'This is the apartment of Lord Ronald,' said the housekeeper. 'I will not show you in there. It contains nothing of interest—that is, nothing very extraordinary. His lordship was a soldier,

and loves to have everything plain. No doubt it contains much that would interest military men, but such as you and me don't understand those pursuits. Here is the Marquess's door. Wait a moment, whilst I tap and peep in to make sure he is out. I am sure he went out shooting, I saw him with the keeper and the dogs—that is,' she corrected herself, 'I saw the keeper and the dogs with him.'

Mrs. Probus tapped timidly, and then opened. 'Look about you,' she said, 'at the costly china. He is out, as I supposed. It is very bold of me to enter and introduce you. See what abundance of porcelain there is here. The Marquess is most particular. He will not allow the housemaids to touch it. When dusty, Lady Grace takes it down and cleans it. He allows no other fingers than hers to touch his valuable collection.'

'How pretty the flowers are,' said Joanna, looking at the bouquets on the table and on the chimney-piece. 'So many posies—and specimen glasses everywhere.'

'Lady Grace always arranges them for her brother,' answered the housekeeper.

'No wonder that they are lovely,' said the girl. 'I should so much like to see Lady Grace.'

'You will do so some day. Yes—' she said, as she saw that Joanna was looking at a miniature on the wall over the fireplace, 'that is her ladyship when she was younger—when she was about eighteen.'

Joanna looked at the portrait with interest for a long while. Reluctantly, at last, she turned away and began to examine the china.

'This is Chelsea,' she said, contemptuously, 'bad of its kind.'

'It cannot be bad,' protested Mrs. Probus, 'or it would not be here.'

'This group—' began Joanna, putting forth her finger.

Mrs. Probus arrested her hand. 'For heaven's sake do not touch. You might break—and then—dear life! I should sink through the floor in shame and sorrow.'

'I shall not break anything,' answered Joanna. 'I could walk like a cat among Dresden figures, or a best Swansea service, and not upset or injure one article. Besides, if that group were broken, what odds! It is a modern imitation.'

'What! a connoisseur among my china! Condemning it, moreover!'

Mrs. Probus turned, shivered through all the gathers of her silk gown, raised her hands deprecatingly, and turned pale.

Joanna looked round at the speaker and recognised the Marquess from the photograph she had been shown. She said,



with perfect composure, 'Yes, my lord, this piece is not genuine. I can tell it by the colour of the glaze.'

'Indeed! I gave a long price for it.'

'You were taken in, my lord. It is not worth fifteen shillings.'

'Oh, my lord,' gasped Mrs. Probus, 'I beg your pardon ten thousand times. I thought you was out, and I dared take the liberty—the inexcusable liberty—of bringing this young person

in, who pretended to be interested in porcelain—and her to dare and say your lordship was taken in! You'll excuse my audacity, my lord, I pray, and her ignorance and impertinence.'

'My dear Probus,' said the Marquess, smiling, 'I am over-pleased to have my collection shown to one who has taste and knowledge, and discrimination.' Turning to Joanna, he added, 'I believe, to my cost, that you are right. Doctor Jenkyn, who knows more about china than anyone else in this county, has pronounced unhesitatingly against this piece. You are of the same opinion.'

'I know it, my lord. I know where it was made. There is a manufactory of these sham antiques. I can tell their articles at a glance.'

'You seem to have an accurate eye and considerable knowledge.'

'In my former situation I was with a master who collected china, and so I learned all about it—if I broke any, I got whacks.'

'Don't be so familiar,' whispered Mrs. Probus, greatly shocked.

'And,' continued Joanna, 'my master, after a while, so trusted my judgment, that he would let me spend pounds on pounds on porcelain for him.'

'Were you never taken in?'

Joanna laughed. *She* taken in! 'Never, my lord.'

'I should like to know your opinion of these bits of Chelsea.'

'I have already given it,' said Joanna, disregarding the monitions of the housekeeper. 'I told Mrs. Probus it was a lot of rubbish.'

The Marquess laughed.

'Right again. That is exactly Dr. Jenkyn's opinion, not expressed quite as forcibly as by you.'

'Here, my lord, you have a charming little Dresden cup and saucer; really good; canary yellow, with the cherubs in pink. It is well painted, and good of its kind.'

'Keep it,' said the Marquess. 'I make you a present of it as a remembrance of my den which you have invaded.'

'Thank you, thank you! this is kind,' said Joanna, with sparkling eye. 'I will never part with my little cup, never; and I beg pardon, my lord, for having persuaded Mrs. Probus to bring me in here, against her better judgment. It was not her fault, it was mine. I entreated her to let me see your china.'

‘Not another word; you are heartily welcome. If I want to buy china again, I will consult you.’

Joanna withdrew with a curtesy. Lord Saltcombe signed to the housekeeper to remain behind.

‘Who is the little china-fancier?’ he asked, in a low tone.

‘Oh, my lord! I am so ashamed. Only the new housemaid at the Lodge.’

‘Indeed! How education advances!’ laughed the Marquess. ‘In the march of culture we are being overtaken. Who would have supposed to find a housemaid so thorough a connoisseur? Well, she looks brimming over with brains, she has plenty of assurance, and is deucedly pretty.’

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### LADY GRACE.

THE words of commendation spoken by the Marquess were sufficient to make Mrs. Probus think of Joanna with more favour than before. She had recovered from her panic, Joanna had cleverly taken all the blame on herself, so the old woman’s face was wreathed with smiles, and she professed her readiness to show the girl whatever she desired. The Marquess had pronounced on her abilities—a word of commendation from him was enough for Mrs. Probus.

‘I daresay, my dear,’ said she, confidentially, ‘that Mr. Blomfield, the butler, will let you see the plate.’

‘I am a judge of plate,’ said Joanna, gravely. ‘I know the hall marks on silver as I do those on china.’

‘You do? Lord bless me!’ exclaimed the housekeeper. ‘Well, what is education coming to? That shows his lordship was right. He said you had brains.’

‘Did he? Then he can judge people as I judge china. I should very much like to see the plate.’

Mr. Blomfield did not require much pressing; he was proud to show the splendour of the house in his department. He allowed Joanna to enter the plate room, and he opened for her the iron doors of the cupboards in the wall, and exhibited the shelves, lined with green cloth, on which shone centre-pieces, goblets, urns, tea and coffee pots, spoons and forks, salvers large and

small, candlesticks and candelabra. All were in perfect order, shining brilliantly.

'This,' said Mr. Blomfield, opening another case, 'contains very old family plate. It is only brought out on the grandest state occasions. Here is a silver gilt ewer, magnificently chased, said to be three hundred years old; the present Duke was baptized out of it, but I believe it was a punchbowl formerly. Much of this is admired, but I cannot say I like it. The forks have but two prongs, and the spoons are rat-tailed. There is no accounting for the taste that can admire such things as these.'

'I suppose, sir, you have an inventory of all the plate,' said Joanna timidly, raising her large dark eyes to those of the butler.

'Of course, miss, I have; and I go over it with the steward on occasions. Very proper it should be so, though a mere matter of form. You will not find many mansions where there is such choice of plate. There is a great salver which was presented to Field-Marshal John, Duke of Kingsbridge, when he was Lord Saltcombe, in King George's reign, by the mayor and citizens of Ghent. I've heard,' continued the butler, 'that in some of your parvenu families there is a lot of plate, a great and vulgar display—but the quality is not there. All this is old and fine; and in good style. The new plate looks to-dayish; there is not the character about it that our ancestral store possesses.'

'Do you know, sir, what you have got in each cupboard?'

'Of course I do, miss. Do you not see that a list of the contents of each is pasted against the iron door, inside? And with the list is the weight in silver and gold.'

'What is the weight of the whole amount of silver, Mr. Blomfield?' asked the housekeeper.

'I have never counted,' was his reply. 'It is easily done; sum the totals affixed to each list on the doors.'

'I should dearly like to know,' said Joanna. 'Where I was before I came here there was a good deal of plate; but nothing like this, oh, nothing!'

'I suppose not,' said Mr. Blomfield with dignity. 'No one with a title, I suppose?'

'Oh dear no. What about now, do you think, sir, is the weight?'

'I will take the numbers down and add them up,' said Mrs. Probus good-naturedly.



'Excuse me, sir,' said Joanna; 'you have a very beautiful bread-basket there. Might I look at it more closely, and see the hall mark?'

'Certainly.' He handed the basket to her. Joanna looked at the handle. 'It belongs to the reign of William and Mary. The year I cannot say without a book.'

'Dear, now! To think you have found that out! I have had to do with plate all my life, and know nothing more of the marks than to look for the lion and the head.'

'Here is the sum of the weight of plate,' said Mrs. Probus. 'The silver in this column, the gold in that.'

'All that?' exclaimed Joanna. 'Why, the silver at six-and-six an ounce, without allowing anything for workmanship, is—five thousand ounces—sixteen hundred and twenty-five pounds; but it would sell at a pound an ounce. Five thousand pounds' worth of plate at the lowest.'

'You can calculate pretty quickly,' laughed the butler.

'The Marquess said she had brains,' said Mrs. Probus aside to Mr. Blomfield; 'he was quite taken with her cleverness.' Then to Joanna, 'Now I will show you over the conservatories. You may keep the sum of the plate if you like.'

'Thank you,' answered Joanna. 'I shall like it very much.'

Joanna was one of those children of this century, and of town civilisation, in whom shrewdness and simplicity, precocity and childishness, are strangely mixed together. When in the house among the furniture, china, and plate, she was reserved, observant, calculating, storing her observations in her retentive memory, prizing everything she saw; but when she entered the green-houses, that calculating spirit left her, and she was an unspoiled girl, overflowing with fresh delight, full of exuberant spirits. In the house, amidst the artistic valuables, she was in a world with which she was acquainted; in the conservatories she had passed to another and unfamiliar sphere. She had been reared in the midst of manufactured goods, apart from nature; now she was introduced to nature's best creations. Mrs. Probus was amused at the girl's expressions of rapture at the beauty of what she saw. Grapes she saw for the first time hanging from the vines, and oranges shining among the glossy leaves of the trees, side by side with silvery flowers. The dwarf apricots and nectarines were still burdened with fruit.

When she saw the flowers her excitement was unbounded.

She laughed and cried at once. Her cheeks flushed, her eyes sparkled, hands and feet were in incessant agitation. The primulas, the cyclamen, were in full, delicate bloom. The wax-like camellias, white and crimson, were in flower; chrysanthemums, screened from frost, were in tufts of every colour. The air was scented with white Roman hyacinths.

'Oh!' cried Joanna, with hands uplifted, 'I would that the Barbican and all the world would sink into the ocean, and leave me alone here, to be happy with the flowers, for ever.'

At that moment the door from the next, the orchid house, opened, and Lady Grace Eveleigh appeared, dressed in silvery grey, with a quiet, close bonnet on her head. She looked at the excited girl with a sweet, confidence-inspiring smile, and came forward.

'Dear alive, my lady!' exclaimed Mrs. Probus, 'I am a most unfortunate body to-day. I took the liberty of taking this young woman through the conservatories, without a thought that your ladyship was here. I have been unfortunate, indeed, this afternoon.'

'Not at all, not at all, Probus,' said Lady Grace, 'I am always delighted that others should enjoy our pretty flowers. You like flowers,' she added, turning to Joanna, her voice soft as the cooing of a dove.

'I love them,' said the girl, clasping her hands together.

'What were you saying as I came in?' asked Lady Grace.

Joanna answered, half laughing, half crying, 'I said that I wished the world would sink under the sea and leave me alone with the flowers.'

'That was rather a selfish wish,' said Lady Grace. 'Do you not care that others should share your pleasure?'

'No, not at all,' answered Joanna, bluntly.

'Excuse her, my lady,' put in Mrs. Probus, with a frightened look, 'she doesn't mean really to differ from your ladyship; she doesn't understand what she says.'

'I do! hold your tongue,' said Joanna, turning sharply on the housekeeper.

'Do not trouble yourself, dear Probus. Whoever loves flowers has a kindred feeling with me. I love them with all my heart.' She looked at Joanna, who stood undecided what to say or do. Then, turning to Mrs. Probus, she said, 'Will you do me a favour, and yield your place to me, nurse? Let me take her round the

houses. You do not know the pleasure it gives me to show the flowers to one who can feel towards them like myself.'

'Very well, my lady,' said the old woman, 'but you must not take it amiss—if this young person—'

'I shall take it greatly amiss,' interrupted the lady, 'if she does not admire what I admire. I can see in her bright eyes that she is happy with my pets. Leave us alone together; we shall perfectly understand each other. We flower fanciers have a language of our own, understandable among ourselves, sealed to outsiders.'

When Mrs. Probus was gone, Lady Grace, looking kindly into the girl's excited face, asked, 'Will you tell me what is your name?'

'Joanna.'

'Joanna!' repeated Lady Grace. 'That name is uncommon. It is pretty, very pretty, and quaint. I like it.'

The girl flushed with pleasure and pride.

'I am glad you like it,' she said; 'I never thought a button about my name before. Now I shall like it.'

'I hope you like Probus,' said the lady. 'She was my nurse long, long ago. She used to scold me a little and caress me a great deal.'

'Please, my lady,' Joanna spoke timidly, 'may I go very, very slowly along, because all this is so new and so beautiful that I cannot bear to miss anything. Mrs. Probus walked so fast, and was afraid of staying long anywhere.'

'I will go as slow as you like, and stop as long as suits you beside any flower. That is a yellow primula; look, under the leaves is white flour, it comes off on your finger, and that gives the plant its Latin name. It has a sweet scent. Whence do you come from, Joanna?'

The girl pointed downwards.

The questioner looked at her with surprise, not understanding the significance of the indication.

'Out of the depths. Picked out of the mud—true as my word unvarnished,' explained Joanna.

'So is it with the water-lily,' said Lady Grace, 'one of the purest and most glorious of flowers. Its roots are in the basest slime, its flowers in the sunshine without soil. I am sure, Joanna, you will grow up as the water-lily.'

The girl shook her head. 'You don't understand. I am not a flower, but a grub.'

'And the grub becomes a butterfly, that soars far above the garbage on which it crawled and fed.'

'I can never be a butterfly.'

'You can rise.'

'I am rising,' said Joanna, firmly; 'I intend to rise. But you think your way and I think mine. You rise your way, which I cannot understand or copy, and I rise mine as I may, in whatever direction chance gives me an opening.'

Lady Grace looked into the girl's face and tried to decipher its language. She saw that the mind was full of intelligence, precociously developed. She saw that ideas were working which Joanna was powerless to express. The girl misunderstood the intent look of the lady, and said, 'I have made you angry. Everyone here is taught to agree with you. I say what I think. Whether it jumps or jars with the opinions of others matters little to me.'

'I like you to speak out of your heart freshly what you think.'

'Then,' said Joanna, eagerly, 'I think there is not a flower in all this place so sweet and so beautiful as you, lady.'

'You must not say that.' Lady Grace coloured.

'Why not? It is true.'

'No, it is not true.'

'I think it.'

'Never mind. Do not speak such things. I do not like them, and they will make me distrust you.'

Both were silent for a few minutes, and then Joanna said, 'How very, very happy you must be here, my lady.'

'Yes,' answered the lady, in her soft, sweet voice, in which was a tone of sadness, 'I am happy.'

Joanna noticed the omission.

'Why do you not say *very* happy?'

'I am indeed happy and thankful.'

Joanna now looked at her as intently as Lady Grace had previously observed *her*. The expression on Joanna's face was one of perplexity. At last she said, 'I don't understand, and I can't understand.'

'What, Joanna?'

'My lady, you do not and you cannot understand me, and I do not, and try as I may I cannot, understand you. We belong to different worlds.'

'And are forgetting the bond between us—the flowers.'

Presently Lady Grace pointed to an arcade, where, against the wall, oranges, limes, and citrons were growing.

‘Do you notice these trees?’ she said; ‘they are very ancient, one or two of them are as much as two hundred years old.’

‘What a pity!’ answered Joanna; ‘they must be worn out. You should stub them out and plant new, improved sorts.’

Lady Grace went into the vinery, and brought thence a large bunch of green Muscatel grapes on a leaf. She presented it, smiling, to Joanna.

‘It is a pleasure,’ she said, ‘to have grapes for the sick and those who have no vineries of their own. They do enjoy them so greatly.’

‘Do you give grapes away?’

‘Yes, of course we do.’

‘But you might sell them and make a lot of money—enough to pay the gardener’s wage.’

Lady Grace coloured and laughed. ‘We couldn’t possibly do that.’

‘Why not?’

‘For one reason, because then we should have no grapes to give away.’

‘But you are not obliged to give them away?’

‘To the sick, of course we are.’

‘Why of course?’

‘Why, *because* they are sick.’

‘They should buy grapes for themselves if they require them.’

‘They are poor, and cannot do so.’

‘Then let them do without. You are not bound to them, nor they to you.’

Lady Grace, with a little sadness on her brow, but a smile on her lips, said, observing her, ‘It is a pleasure to give them what they cannot get themselves. There, it is a greater pleasure to me to watch you enjoying that bunch of Muscatel than if I were eating it myself.’

Joanna shook her head. ‘We belong to different worlds,’ she said. ‘If these greenhouses were mine I would keep everyone out but myself, and I would spend my life in them, looking at the flowers and eating the grapes.’

‘You would not spare me a bunch?’

‘I would give you everything,’ said Joanna, vehemently.

‘Why?’

‘Because I love you, and would want to make you love me.’

'You ought to love the sick, the suffering, and the needy, and be ready to relieve them.'

'They are nothing to me. They can do nothing for me.'

'We are all one family, tied together by common blood, bound by mutual duties, members of one body; and the hand cannot say to the foot, "I have no need of you," nor the head to the hand, "I have no need of you."'

'We are individuals,' answered Joanna. 'To look out for self is the law of life and of progress. I have heard Laz—I mean my late master—say that this it is which makes the United States so great and prosperous, that every man lives as an unit, cares nothing for his fellows, and beats his way through and over all who stand in his path. This it is which makes the old order fail, that every man under it was entangled in responsibilities to every man around him, above, below, and on his level, and was not free. The old order must give way to the new. That is what my master said.'

'I do not like your theory, Joanna. It grates with my notions of right and wrong.'

'I daresay not, my lady. You have been reared under the old principle of social life, I under the new. Each man for himself, my master said, is the motto of the coming age, and those who are hampered with the old doctrines of mutual responsibilities must go down.'

'You are a very extraordinary girl.'

'No, my lady, I am not. I am merely the child of the period, a representative of the coming age; there are thousands and tens of thousands like me, trained in the same school. To us belongs the future.'

Lady Grace Eveleigh sighed, and put her hand to her brow, unconsciously. 'I have no doubt you are right,' she said; 'I feel rather than see that it is so. Yes—perhaps it is well. I do not know. I suppose I am prejudiced. I like the old order best.'

Joanna was frightened. She had spoken too boldly; not insolently, but confidently. She feared she had hurt her guide. When Lady Grace put her hand to her brow, it was as though she had received a blow. Joanna touched her.

'Was I rude? Have I pained you? I am very, very sorry. I would die rather than hurt you.' She caught Lady Grace's hand and kissed it.

'No, not a bit,' answered the lady. 'It does one good to know

the truth. Sooner or later it must be brought home to us, and rather from your lips than from a ruder tongue. We go on in a dream, with the poor always about and with us, and will wake up with surprise to find them above us. I hear my father and uncles forecasting the future, with dismal faces; I did not expect to hear the same forecast animating the rising power. Do not let us talk of that longer. Let us consider the flowers. By the way, I suppose you will be at our Christmas tenants' ball. We give one in the winter to the farmers and their families, and to the servants and their friends. Of course you will be there.'

'Oh what a pity, what a pity, what a pity!'

Lady Grace was unable to refrain a laugh at the girl's exclamations and droll consternation.

'What is such a pity?' she asked.

'I was to have learned to dance, but my coming here interfered with my lessons, so I can only look on and not be able to take a part.'

'You shall have some lessons,' said Lady Grace Eveleigh, with a sweet, kind smile. 'I will see to that. Miss Worthivale will arrange what times will suit best, and you shall be taught by me, in my own room. Miss Worthivale is so good and sweet that she will help me.'

'Oh, thank you, thank you,' exclaimed Joanna; 'that is prime!'

'There is one thing more,' said the lady; 'as you are fond of flowers, I suppose you must have something like a garden at home.'

'I have five pots—one cracked, and an old teapot without a spout.'

'What grow in them?'

'Fuchsias, Guernsey lilies, geranium, and wild heath.'

'Will you accept this from me? It is nothing to look at now; only a crowd of little horns poking out of the earth; but they will expand in time into lilies of the valley, full of beauty and fragrance. Keep them as a remembrance of me.'

'I will never, never part with them,' said Joanna. 'This is the second present I have had to-day. Look here! Your brother gave me this.' She showed the porcelain cup and saucer.

'Lord Saltcombe gave you that! What—have you been talking to and astonishing him?'

'Yes,' said the girl, 'I did astonish him a bit. He gave me this; but I like your flowers best.'



‘I must leave you now; I saw my father return in the carriage.’ Lady Grace hesitated a moment, looked questioningly at Joanna, and then touched her, drew her to her, and pressed a light kiss on her brow. ‘We are travellers over one pass. Some ascend as others go down; as they meet and pass, they salute,’ she said, and slipped away.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

## SLEEPY HOLLOW.

THE Venerable the Archdeacon of Wellington, Bachelor of Divinity, Canon of Glastonbury, Rector of Sleepy Hollow, and Chaplain to his Grace the Duke of Kingsbridge, was sitting in his study with his wife one morning in November, discussing the list of poor people to whom Christmas benefactions were to be given.

The Archdeacon regarded himself, and was regarded, as a man of business. He was secretary to several diocesan societies; he was a stay to the Kingsbridge family. Whenever a spasm recurred in the financial condition of the Eveleighs, a telegram summoned him to South Devon, and he spent some hours in consultation with the steward at Court Royal. When he returned to Somersetshire he felt that his presence had been of use. So it had on more occasions than one, for he had advanced money to relieve the strain.

‘Really,’ said Lady Elizabeth Eveleigh—the Venerable the Archdeaconess, and Grey Mare of Sleepy Hollow—‘I think we do a great deal more than is necessary. There are the coal club, and the clothing club, and the blanket club, and the shoe club, and the Sunday school club, and the widows’ alms, and the three yards of flannel to every married woman in the place, and the Christmas largess and the Christmas beef. This comes very heavy. You cannot put our charities at a less figure than sixty pounds per annum; then that great imposture, Queen Anne’s Bounty, absorbs sixty pounds more, and the rates come to eighty, and the curate gets one hundred and twenty-five. Church expenses amount to ten pounds; the living is worth three hundred and forty pounds—that leaves us just five pounds on which to keep house, pay five servants, and entertain all the neighbourhood, subscribe to every church restoration, and contribute to every bazaar.’

‘My dear Elizabeth, I have my canonry.’

‘Worth eight hundred pounds, which goes into that Goodwin

Sand, the Kingsbridge debt. I know it does. Do not pull a face; I know it. I never finger the money.'

'Then there is my archdeaconry, worth two hundred.'

'Out of which we pay the servants and keep the carriage. Edward, it is really too bad; you ought to have been a Bishop.'

'Elizabeth, how is that possible, with the Liberals in power?'

'I am sure that ought to be no hindrance to your promotion. You have never offered an opinion decidedly on any topic, political or ecclesiastical, that could be objected to by anyone. You have been most tolerant. Your charities have been given indiscriminately to Dissenters and Church people. You never have taken a side. You have been scrupulously *via media*.'

'I do not want to be a Bishop. I have not the physical strength.'

'I do. A bishopric means a good deal more than the four thousand set down in "Whitaker"—it means getting a haul out of Queen Anne, and some pickings, may be, from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.'

'Let us return to the lists, Elizabeth. We are considering Betty Perkins, not me.'

'Betty Perkins puts me out of patience,' said the Venerable the Grey Mare. 'She has only just paid into the clubs one lump sum. I cannot see the good of clubs and rules, if she is to be allowed to reap the benefit of the former whilst violating the latter. She has sent in four-and-fourpence for the coal club, four-and-fourpence for the clothing club, four-and-fourpence for the shoe club, four-and-fourpence for the blanket club, and twenty-one shillings and eightpence for her five children, who only attend Sunday school now and then—just before the treat and the Christmas tree. I have her money in my pocket now—listen how it rattles—thirty-nine shillings in all. She will get her cards with seventy-eight shillings on them, just thirty-nine shillings allowed her for putting in her money to-day, to receive it out with interest to-morrow. It is preposterous. I believe she borrowed the sum for the occasion. I refuse to be treasurer and secretary to the charitable clubs if you wink at such flagrant cases.'

'My dear Elizabeth, there is no one else in the parish capable of managing the clubs. As to Betty Perkins, consider how poor she is, with a husband given to drink, and five children.'

'Rules are rules,' said Lady Elizabeth.

'Yes, my dear, but justice must be tempered with mercy.'

'I do not think the clubs and alms do good. The people take what is given them as a right. They are not grateful; they do not come to church a bit the better for being bribed at the rate of five pounds per house to come.'

'We cannot give up the clubs, Elizabeth. They really are a great comfort to the people.'

'You pauperise them, Edward. Well?' to the man-servant who appeared at the door; 'what is it, Thomas?'

'Please, my lady, there is a gentleman in the drawing-room who wants to see his lordship.'

'Let me look at the card,' said the Archdeaconess. 'Rigsby! Rigsby—I do not know the name. Some traveller for a wine merchant, I suppose.'

'Bless me!' exclaimed Lord Edward Eveleigh, when, by his wife's kind permission, he was allowed to look at the card; 'my old college friend Rigsby. I thought he was in Ceylon, coffee-growing. I heard he had realised a great fortune. Excuse me, my dear Elizabeth. Settle Betty Perkins as you like—that is, no, let her off this time, and I will have a talk with her. She will be more regular next year. Elizabeth, I must ask Rigsby to lunch.'

'There is cold mutton and mince,' answered Lady Elizabeth. 'Also tapioca pudding.'

'I haven't seen Rigsby for forty years—no, not for forty years. I must insist on his paying us a visit. You can manage it, Elizabeth?'

'The sheets in the best bedroom are aired.'

The Archdeacon hastened into the parlour, where he found a tall brown man, with grey hair, seated, awaiting him.

'I am so glad—so delighted to see you again,' said Lord Edward, extending both hands.

'I have come,' said Mr. Rigsby, 'on my daughter's account. We have been visiting Glastonbury, and she has been taken ill there, whether with neuralgia or toothache it is not for me to determine. She is a sad sufferer—and I thought, being in a strange place, that I might venture on calling, trusting you might not have quite forgotten me—'

'My dear Rigsby—' interrupted the Archdeacon, with overflowing cordiality.

'Excuse me,' said the visitor, putting up his hand to stop him,

'I will say what I desire first, and then shall be thankful for your remarks on it. I was observing that I relied on your kindness, which I well remembered, to help me with your advice. I am a stranger in Glastonbury, indeed a stranger in England. You have a local dentist here—that is, at Glastonbury. I want to know—'

'Vigurs is the man for you,' said Lord Edward.

'One moment, and I have done,' continued Mr. Rigsby, looking with impatience at the Archdeacon. 'I have no confidence, myself, in local practitioners; if there be real genius it will unquestionably gravitate to town, and the dregs of the profession be left in the country.'

'I beg your pardon—'

'You will allow me to finish what I was saying,' Rigsby looked Lord Edward down. 'One hears atrocious stories of the misdeeds of these men—breaking jaws, drawing the wrong teeth, and so on. I could not suffer Dulcina to run such a risk unless I were perfectly satisfied that the man was really first-rate.'

'Vigurs is a splendid fellow; a thorough Churchman, and always stays—'

'Excuse me if I say that this is neither here nor there. I do not care a snap for the religion and politics of Mr. Vigurs, but I do care for his being a first-class dentist. It is a long way to town, and Dulcina's sufferings are so intense that I am inclined to place my sweet child in the hands of a man, even if in the country, if he may be trusted. I suppose that in Bath or in Bristol a dentist of some experience and intelligence—'

'I can assure you—'

'I shall have done directly. I was observing, when interrupted, that in Bath or Bristol a dentist of experience may be found, but that would entail a journey to Bath or Bristol. Dulcina, poor child, is so prostrated by her pains last night that I hardly like to move her so far. If you saw the sweet flower, you would say the same—so fragile, so fair, so languishing.'

'You may rely on Vigurs,' said the Archdeacon. 'He has drawn many of my teeth and stopped others. Vigurs is quite a first-rate man.'

'If the tooth be drawn, ether or nitrous oxide must be used. Can I trust this man to employ such means? My child's life is too precious to be played with. She is my only child, heiress to all the fortune I have toiled for forty years to gain. She

will be worth ten thousand a year after I am gone. Judge if the world can do without one so gifted. As for me, I live only for Dulcinea. Were she to expire under nitrous oxide I should blow out my brains.'

'Have perfect confidence in Vigurs. He is a man of note. This neighbourhood is well peopled with county families, and they all go to Vigurs in preference to London dentists. Where is your daughter now?'

'She is at the White Hart. Miss Stokes, her aunt, is with her. She has administered soothing drops, and Dulcinea is asleep. Poor soul, she needs repose after the torture of tooth-ache or neuralgia. I do not pretend to determine which it is, but she has a carious molar. I have seen it. You are positive that Mr. Vigurs may be allowed to look at my daughter's jaw?'

'Positive. First-rate man, gentle as a lamb with ladies. Now Rigsby, as your daughter is asleep, spare me a few minutes to tell me something about yourself. You look well burnt like a coffee-berry, but hearty—more so than myself, who am but a creaking gate. Have you definitely left Ceylon?'

'Yes; Dulcinea and I came here to look at a house and park that is for sale. Dulcinea and I intend to settle in the country. I have sold my estates in Ceylon, providentially before the coffee disease invaded the island, so that I sold them well, and the purchaser, not I, has been ruined, for which I cannot be too thankful. We like this county, and this part of the country. It is rich, well wooded, and there seem to be many gentlemen's seats about. I cannot say that Shotley Park is quite to our taste, but we will think over it, and discuss it together when Dulcinea's tooth ceases to distract her. Poor dear, she can give her attention to nothing now but her tooth and the nerve that runs up into the head across the cheek from the jaw.'

'Will you take anything?'

'I should not object to a glass of sherry and a biscuit. Nervousness about my daughter has rather shaken me.'

'Now look here, Rigsby. I will not hear of your staying at the White Hart. You must positively come to my house and stay a fortnight. Under that time I will not let you off; stay over it as long as you like.'

'Thank you. I do not mind if I accept. If anything has to be done to my dear Dulcinea's jaw, it would be more satisfactory to be in your Rectory than in an inn. One cannot secure all the

comforts requisite for an invalid at an hotel. Should the tooth be extracted or the nerve destroyed, my daughter will be so shattered that further travel will be impossible for some days. The people at the White Hart are good and kind; still an inn is not a place for a person with a carious tooth. Dulcina is made uncomfortable by the scream of the engines. Glastonbury is a terminus, and every engine that comes in shrieks to announce its arrival, and every one that leaves shrieks to proclaim its departure. Dulcina's nerves are in that quivering state of irritation that the least noise upsets her.'

'She shall come here at once. I will send my carriage.'

'We will come in the afternoon. I must go and see the dentist myself. I shall be able to judge by his looks whether he is intelligent—as for his experience, of that I cannot form an opinion. Has he studied in America? The Yankees are far ahead of us in dentistry. They transplant teeth as we do trees.'

'Wait a moment,' said the Archdeacon; 'I will fetch Lady Elizabeth.'

He ran out of the room, and found his wife still engaged over the club accounts.

'My dear Edward,' said she, 'I will meet your wishes half-way; I can do no more. Betty Perkins shall have two-and-twopence instead of four-and-fourpence in each club.'

'Elizabeth,' exclaimed the Archdeacon, 'come into the drawing-room and see Rigsby. But stay—first give me the telegraph forms; I must send off at once for Saltcombe.'

'Why so? What has occurred?'

'My dear Elizabeth, Rigsby has an only daughter, worth ten thousand a year. That represents about two hundred and fifty to three hundred thousand pounds. Oh, Elizabeth, if only some of the Kingsbridge estates might be cleared with this sum, how happy we should all be!'

## CHAPTER XX.

### DULCINA.

IN the afternoon Lord and Lady Edward Eveleigh called on the Rigsbys. The Archdeaconess was full of civility. She was a pleasant, fine-looking woman, with grey hair, and very clear eyes. She spoke in a decided manner. She had ruled her house, her

husband—almost the Archdeaconry—for many years. She had ruled society—at least clerical society—for a wide radius. This had given decision to her character and a determination to be obeyed which few were strong enough to stand against.

Miss Rigsby was seated on a sofa. She had expected the visit, and was prepared for it. She wore a crude blue shawl thrown over her shoulders, and a mauve handkerchief was tied round her aching



jaws. She had bracelets on both arms, and her fingers were encrusted with rings. She was a pale, freckled young lady, not ugly, and not pretty, with very light eyebrows, and hair thick and coarse. She was proud of her red hair, and had it frizzed into a mass. Her grey eyes were dull, but the pain she had endured had perhaps quenched their light.

‘I am going to carry you off to the Rectory,’ said Lady Elizabeth. ‘It is of no use your protesting. What I have made up my



mind to I carry out, as the diocese well knows. I restored Sleepy Hollow church myself. I said to the Archdeacon, "It must be done," and as he would not put his shoulder to the wheel, I begged, got up a bazaar, and did it. I am going to make much of you. You want the quiet and comfort of an English home. We'll soon set you on your feet again, and screw up the relaxed nerves. I know exactly what you want.'

Mr. Rigsby looked entreatingly at his daughter. He had made up his mind to spend a fortnight at Sleepy Hollow, but he did not dare to accept the invitation without the consent of his spoiled child.

Dulcina answered, in a condescending tone, 'I am afraid we shall be in your way.'

'Not at all, or I would not have asked you.'

Mr. Rigsby brightened. His daughter was yielding.

'The invitation is kind,' said Dulcina, 'and if I did not fear trespassing on your goodness I should like to accept.'

'Then accept,' said Lady Elizabeth. 'There—the matter is concluded. I gave orders for the rooms to be got ready before I left the Rectory.'

'You are perhaps expecting visitors?'

'Only Lord Saltcombe—he could be stowed anywhere if we were hard put to, but we are not. Our predecessor at Sleepy Hollow had fourteen children, and added to the Rectory to accommodate them. We have no family, and so there are any number of spare rooms.'

'I am not in a visiting condition,' protested Miss Rigsby; 'my nerves are shaken; I have suffered a great deal.'

'We will put you to rights,' said Lady Elizabeth; 'I understand all that is needed. I doctor the parish—I may almost say I feed it; my opinion is that most maladies proceed from overfeeding or underfeeding. With the poor it is over and underfeeding simultaneously: they overfeed themselves with heavy, lumpy pastry without much nutriment in it, that weighs like lead in them, and they under-feed themselves by not taking good blood and tissue-making diet. You understand me?'

'I think so,' answered Miss Rigsby, listlessly. The poor interested her little or nothing—she occupied her own entire horizon. 'But I,' she said, 'eat neither what is lumpy, nor what is insufficient.'

'My dear,' said the Archdeaconess, 'here in an inn you cannot

have the requisite comforts. There is no house in the world like an English house for a person who is sick or convalescent. So it is settled that you come.'

'I really am not up to meeting strangers and making conversation,' said Dulcina.

'Strangers! Oh, Saltcombe! He is my nephew; a nice young man, very agreeable. He will talk, and I can always talk. Besides, Miss Rigsby, if you are going to buy Shotley and settle among us, we must introduce you to the neighbours, when you are well.'

'I do not think papa has settled about Shotley yet.'

'I'll go over the place with him. I will manage everything. I know the quality of the soil on which it is built, the nature of the drainage, and the water supply. I can tell you all the advantages and disadvantages of the place, and I should wish to have a word about the price. I do not choose to have you taken in and pay a fancy price. There is not a glut of country-houses in the market. Leave it to me.'

'Lady Elizabeth is a most knowing and business-like person, you will find,' said the Archdeacon. 'Dear young lady, be persuaded, and spend at least a fortnight with us.'

'Besides,' said the Venerable the Archdeaconess, 'I should like to have Vigurs under my eye. You have no conception what a stimulus it gives to activity and genius when I overlook the workmen. Vigurs, the dentist, has a great respect for me. He would take infinite pains over you, if he knew I was watching him. Vigurs is a good man—still, the best need supervision.'

'There's something in that,' said Mr. Rigsby.

'Then, again,' said Lady Elizabeth, 'I am bent on getting my niece, Lady Grace Eveleigh, to us after Christmas, and I am eager that you, Miss Rigsby, should know her, and see, if that could possibly be contrived, the Duke's beautiful place, Court Royal, which I assure you is one of the finest residences in the West of England. The Duke would be so interested to hear from your father all about Indian affairs; his Grace is particularly interested in India, and, of course, also Ceylon. It would be a treat to him to talk them over with your father, and you—you will be enraptured with the beauty and comfort of Court Royal. Leave this to me: I am a manager. I will get Lady Grace to visit us, and she will invite you there. You are sure to get on well together.'

Lady Elizabeth played to her husband's bat, but the Rigsbys did not see her play. Father and daughter were flattered. The invitation was accepted.

As the Archdeacon and his wife drove home in their brougham, Lord Edward said to his better half—

‘What do you think of her? She is not ugly.’

‘Not pronouncedly ugly, certainly. She is simply uninteresting. I do not think that Saltcombe will care for her.’

‘He *must* take her,’ said the Archdeacon, agitated, putting his hand on that of his wife, and it shook. ‘If he does not, the whole house of Kingsbridge will collapse. My dear Elizabeth, the crash is imminent. I cannot see how that it can be averted except by Saltcombe’s marriage.’

‘But he is so inert. He will not realise the state of affairs.’

‘That is true. But I take on myself to make him realise it, and that excellent young fellow, Beavis Worthivale, who regards him as a brother, will help me.’

Lady Elizabeth shook her head. ‘The time is past when men sacrificed themselves for their families. I do not believe that Saltcombe cares sufficiently for his position, and the family dignity, to saddle himself with a wretched, selfish, inane, pasty-faced East Indian, so that he may redeem the family from ruin and give his position a new lease of splendour.’

‘I will write to him directly I get home,’ said Lord Edward. ‘I have sent a premonitory telegram. He is not so dead to duty as to reject a solemn appeal from me.’

So the Archdeacon, on his return, took up his pen and wrote his nephew the following letter:—

‘My dear Saltcombe,—I particularly want you to come here at once. Pack your portmanteau and start as soon as you possibly can after the receipt of this letter. There are reasons which make me desire your presence here. My dear fellow, you must allow an old man like me to give you a word of advice. You are supposed to know that the property of your dear father, which will one day be yours, is so involved as to be almost past recovery. I say almost, not altogether. It depends on you whether a grand family of historic renown shall sink and disappear. I have no family, your uncle Ronald lost his wife and children. You are unmarried. If you die a bachelor the Ducal title goes, the family becomes extinct. You are bound to continue a race which has

been illustrious and honourable. I cannot bear to think of dear Court Royal passing into other hands. Now, if you marry, you must marry so as to recover the property from its embarrassments. Such an opportunity presents itself. I will speak to you more fully on this when we meet. I pray you, as an old man, your uncle—one who has your welfare, and that of dear Grace, at heart—do not shrug your shoulders and write to say you cannot come. Come at once. Rouse yourself to the emergencies of the case. Rouse yourself to your duty. An Eveleigh has never hitherto wanted goading to perform a duty; never—when required—to commit an act of self-sacrifice.

‘Till we meet—which will be to-morrow,

‘Yours most affectionately,

‘EDWARD EVELEIGH.

‘P.S.—Elizabeth sends her tenderest love to dear Grace. Kiss her sweet face for me.’

*(To be continued.)*

## FOSSIL FOOD.

THERE is something at first sight rather ridiculous in the idea of eating a fossil. To be sure, when the frozen mammoths of Siberia were first discovered, though they had been dead for at least 80,000 years (according to Dr. Croll's minimum reckoning for the end of the great ice age), and might therefore naturally have begun to get a little musty, they had nevertheless been kept so fresh, like a sort of prehistoric Australian mutton, in their vast natural refrigerators, that the wolves and bears greedily devoured the precious relics for which the naturalists of Europe would have been ready gladly to pay the highest market price of best beefsteak. Those carnivorous vandals gnawed off the skin and flesh with the utmost appreciation, and left nothing but the tusks and bones to adorn the galleries of the new Natural History Museum at South Kensington. But then wolves and bears, especially in Siberia, are not exactly fastidious about the nature of their meat diet. Furthermore, some of the bones of extinct animals found beneath the stalagmitic floor of caves, in England and elsewhere, presumably of about the same age as the Siberian mammoths, still contain enough animal matter to produce a good strong stock for antediluvian broth, which has been scientifically described by a high authority as pre-Adamite jelly. The congress of naturalists at Tübingen a few years since had a smoking tureen of this cave-bone soup placed upon the dinner table at their hotel one evening, and pronounced it with geological enthusiasm 'scarcely inferior to prime oxtail.' But men of science, too, are accustomed to trying unsavoury experiments, which would go sadly against the grain with less philosophic and more squeamish palates. They think nothing of tasting a caterpillar that birds will not touch, in order to discover whether it owes its immunity from attack to some nauseous, bitter, or pungent flavouring; and they even advise you calmly to discriminate between two closely similar species of snails by trying which of them when chewed has a delicate *soupeçon* of oniony aroma. So that naturalists in this matter, as the children say, don't count: their universal thirst for knowledge will prompt them to drink anything, down even to *consommé* of quaternary cave-bear.

There is one form of fossil food, however, which appears con-

stantly upon all our tables at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, every day, and which is so perfectly familiar to every one of us that we almost forget entirely its immensely remote geological origin. The salt in our salt-cellars is a fossil product, laid down ages ago in some primæval Dead Sea or Caspian, and derived in all probability (through the medium of the grocer) from the triassic rocks of Cheshire or Worcestershire. Since that thick bed of rock-salt was first precipitated upon the dry floor of some old evaporated inland sea, the greater part of the geological history known to the world at large has slowly unrolled itself through incalculable ages. The dragons of the prime have begun and finished their long (and Lord Tennyson says slimy) race. The fish-like saurians and flying pterodactyls of the secondary period have come into existence and gone out of it gracefully again. The whole family of birds has been developed and diversified into its modern variety of eagles and titmice. The beasts of the field have passed through sundry stages of mammoth and mastodon, of sabre-toothed lion and huge rhinoceros. Man himself has progressed gradually from the humble condition of a 'hairy arboreal quadruped'—these bad words are Mr. Darwin's own—to the glorious elevation of an erect two-handed creature, with a county suffrage question and an intelligent interest in the latest proceedings of the central divorce court. And after all those manifold changes, compared to which the entire period of English history, from the landing of Julius Cæsar to the appearance of this present article (to take two important landmarks), is as one hour to a human lifetime, we quietly dig up the salt to-day from that dry lake bottom, and proceed to eat it with the eggs laid by the hens this morning for this morning's breakfast, just as though the one foodstuff were not a whit more ancient or more dignified in nature than the other. Why, mammoth steak is really quite modern and commonplace by the side of the salt in the salt-cellar that we treat so cavalierly every day of our ephemeral existence.

The way salt got originally deposited in these great rock beds is very well illustrated for us by the way it is still being deposited in the evaporating waters of many inland seas. Every schoolboy knows of course (though some persons who are no longer schoolboys may just possibly have forgotten) that the Caspian is in reality only a little bit of the Mediterranean, which has been cut off from the main sea by the gradual elevation of the country between them. For many ages the intermediate soil has been quite

literally rising in the world, but to this day a continuous chain of salt lakes and marshes runs between the Caspian and the Black Sea, and does its best to keep alive the memory of the time when they were both united in a single basin. All along this intervening tract, once sea but now dry land, banks of shells belonging to kinds still living in the Caspian and the Black Sea alike testify to the old line of water communication. One fine morning (date unknown) the intermediate belt began to rise up between them; the water was all pushed off into the Caspian, but the shells remained to tell the tale even unto this day.

Now, when a bit of the sea gets cut off in this way from the main ocean, evaporation of its waters generally takes place rather faster than the return supply of rain, rivers, and lesser tributaries. In other words, the inland sea or salt lake begins slowly to dry up. This is now just happening in the Caspian, which is in fact a big pool in course of being slowly evaporated. By-and-by a point is reached when the water can no longer hold in solution the amount of salts of various sorts that it originally contained. In the technical language of chemists and physicists, it begins to get supersaturated. Then the salts are thrown down as a sediment at the bottom of the sea or lake, exactly as crust forms on the bottom of a kettle. Gypsum is the first material to be so thrown down; because it is less soluble than common salt, and therefore sooner got rid of. It forms a thick bottom layer in the bed of all evaporating inland seas; and as plaster of Paris it not only gives rise finally to artistic monstrosities hawked about the streets for the degradation of national taste, but also plays an important part in the manufacture of bonbons, the destruction of the human digestion, and the ultimate ruin of the dominant white European race. Only about a third of the water in a salt lake need be evaporated before the gypsum begins to be deposited in a solid layer over its whole bed; it is not till 93 per cent. of the water has gone, and only 7 per cent. is left, that common salt begins to be thrown down. When that point of intensity is reached, the salt, too, falls as a sediment to the bottom, and there overlies the gypsum deposit. Hence all the world over, wherever we come upon a bed of rock salt, it almost invariably lies upon a floor of solid gypsum.

The Caspian, being still a very respectably modern sea, constantly supplied with fresh water from the surrounding rivers, has



not yet begun by any means to deposit salt on its bottom from its whole mass, but the shallow pools and long bays around its edge have crusts of beautiful rose-coloured salt-crystals forming upon their sides; and as these lesser basins gradually dry up, the sand, blown before the wind, slowly drifts over them, so as to form miniature rock-salt beds on a very small scale. Nevertheless, the young and vigorous Caspian only represents the first stage in the process of evaporation of an inland sea. It is still fresh enough to form the abode of fish and mollusks; and the irrepressible young lady of the present generation is perhaps even aware that it contains numbers of seals, being in fact the seat of one of the most important and valuable seal-fisheries in the whole world. It may be regarded as a typical example of a yet youthful and lively inland sea.

The Dead Sea, on the other hand, is an old and decrepit salt lake in a very advanced stage of evaporation. It lies several feet below the level of the Mediterranean, just as the Caspian lies several feet below the level of the Black Sea; and as in both cases the surface must once have been continuous, it is clear that the water of either sheet must have dried up to a very considerable extent. But while the Caspian has shrunk only to 85 feet below the Black Sea, the Dead Sea has shrunk to the enormous depth of 1,292 feet below the Mediterranean. Every now and then, some enterprising De Lesseps or other proposes to dig a canal from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea, and so re-establish the old high level. The effect of this very revolutionary proceeding would be to flood the entire Jordan Valley, connect the Sea of Galilee with the Dead Sea, and play the dickens generally with Scripture geography, to the infinite delight of Sunday school classes. Now, when the Dead Sea first began its independent career as a separate sheet of water on its own account, it no doubt occupied the whole bed of this imaginary engineers' lake—spreading, if not from Dan to Beersheba, at any rate from Dan to Edom, or, in other words, along the whole Jordan Valley from the Sea of Galilee and even the Waters of Merom to the southern desert. (I will not insult the reader's intelligence and orthodoxy by suggesting that perhaps he may not be precisely certain as to the exact position of the Waters of Merom; but I will merely recommend him just to refresh his memory by turning to his atlas, as this is an opportunity which may not again occur.) The modern Dead Sea is the last shrunken relic of such a considerable

ancient lake. Its waters are now so very concentrated and so very nasty that no fish or other self-respecting animal can consent to live in them; and so buoyant that a man can't drown himself, even if he tries, because the sea is saturated with salts of various sorts till it has become a kind of soup or porridge, in which a swimmer floats, will he, nill he. Persons in the neighbourhood who wish to commit suicide are therefore obliged to go elsewhere: much as in Tasmania, the healthiest climate in the world, people who want to die are obliged to run across for a week to Sydney or Melbourne.

The waters of the Dead Sea are thus in the condition of having already deposited almost all their gypsum, as well as the greater part of the salt they originally contained. They are, in fact, much like sea water which has been boiled down till it has reached the state of a thick salty liquid; and though most of the salt is now already deposited in a deep layer on the bottom, enough still remains in solution to make the Dead Sea infinitely saltier than the general ocean. At the same time, there are a good many other things in solution in sea water besides gypsum and common salt; such as chloride of magnesium, sulphate of potassium, and other interesting substances with pretty chemical names, well calculated to endear them at first sight to the sentimental affections of the general public. These other by-contents of the water are often still longer in getting deposited than common salt; and owing to their intermixture in a very concentrated form with the mother-liquid of the Dead Sea, the water of that evaporating lake is not only salt but also slimy and fetid to the last degree, its taste being accurately described as half brine, half rancid oil. Indeed, the salt has been so far precipitated already that there is now five times as much chloride of magnesium left in the water as there is common salt. By the way, it is a lucky thing for us that these various soluble minerals are of such constitution as to be thrown down separately at different stages of concentration in the evaporating liquid; for if it were otherwise, they would all get deposited together, and we should find on all old salt lake beds only a mixed layer of gypsum, salt, and other chlorides and sulphates, absolutely useless for any practical human purpose. In that case, we should be entirely dependent upon marine salt pans and evaporation of sea water for our entire salt supply. As it is, we find the materials deposited one above another in regular layers; first, the gypsum at the bottom;

then, the rock-salt; and last of all, on top, the more soluble mineral constituents.

The Great Salt Lake of Utah, sacred to the memory of Brigham Young, gives us an example of a modern saline sheet of very different origin, since it is in fact not a branch of the sea at all, but a mere shrunken remnant of a very large freshwater-lake system, like that of the still-existing St. Lawrence chain. Once upon a time, American geologists say, a huge sheet of water, for which they have even invented a definite name, Lake Bonneville, occupied a far larger valley among the outliers of the Rocky Mountains, measuring 300 miles in one direction by 180 miles in the other. Beside this primitive Superior lay a second great sheet—an early Huron—(Lake Lahontan, the geologists call it) almost as big, and equally of fresh water. By-and-by—the precise dates are necessarily indefinite—some change in the rainfall, unregistered by any contemporary ‘New York Herald,’ made the waters of these big lakes shrink and evaporate. Lake Lahontan shrank away like Alice in Wonderland, till there was absolutely nothing left of it; Lake Bonneville shrank till it attained the diminished size of the existing Great Salt Lake. Terrace after terrace, running in long parallel lines on the sides of the Wahsatch Mountains around, mark the various levels at which it rested for awhile on its gradual downward course. It is still falling indeed: and the plain around is being gradually uncovered, forming the white salt-encrusted shore with which all visitors to the Mormon city are so familiar.

But why should the water have become briny? Why should the evaporation of an old Superior produce at last a Great Salt Lake? Well, there is a small quantity of salt in solution even in the freshest of lakes and ponds, brought down to them by the streams or rivers; and as the water of the hypothetical Lake Bonneville slowly evaporated, the salt and other mineral constituents remained behind. Thus the solution grew constantly more and more concentrated, till at the present day it is extremely saline. Professor Geikie (to whose works the present paper is much indebted) found that he floated on the water in spite of himself; and the under sides of the steps at the bathing-places are all encrusted with short stalactites of salt, produced from the drip of the bathers as they leave the water. The mineral constituents, however, differ considerably in their proportions from those found in true salt lakes of marine origin; and the point at

which the salt is thrown down is still far from having been reached. Great Salt Lake must simmer in the sun for many centuries yet before the point arrives at which (as cooks say) it begins to settle.

That is the way in which deposits of salt are being now produced on the world's surface, in preparation for that man of the future who, as we learn from a duly constituted authority, is to be hairless, toothless, web-footed, and far too respectable ever to be funny. Man of the present derives his existing salt-supply chiefly from beds of rock-salt similarly laid down against his expected appearance some hundred thousand æons or so ago. (An æon is a very convenient geological unit indeed to reckon by; as nobody has any idea how long it is, they can't carp at you for a matter of an æon or two one way or the other.) Rock-salt is found in most parts of the world, in beds of very various ages. The great Salt Range of the Punjaub is probably the earliest in date of all salt deposits; it was laid down at the bottom of some very ancient Asiatic Mediterranean, whose last shrunken remnant covered the upper basin of the Indus and its tributaries during the Silurian age. Europe had then hardly begun to be; and England was probably still covered from end to end by the primæval ocean. From this very primitive salt deposit the greater part of India and Central Asia is still supplied; and the Indian Government makes a pretty penny out of the dues in the shape of the justly detested salt-tax—a tax especially odious because it wrings the fraction of a farthing even from those unhappy agricultural labourers who have never tasted ghee with their rice.

The thickness of the beds in each salt deposit of course depends entirely upon the area of the original sea or salt-lake, and the length of time during which the evaporation went on. Sometimes we may get a mere film of salt; sometimes a solid bed six hundred feet thick. Perfectly pure rock-salt is colourless and transparent; but one doesn't often find it pure. Alas for a degenerate world! even in its original site, Nature herself has taken the trouble to adulterate it beforehand. (If she hadn't done so, one may be perfectly sure that commercial enterprise would have proved equal to the occasion in the long run.) But the adulteration hasn't spoilt the beauty of the salt; on the contrary, it serves, like rouge, to give a fine fresh colour where none existed. When iron is the chief colouring matter, rock-salt assumes a beautiful clear red tint; in other cases it is emerald

green or pale blue. As a rule, salt is prepared from it for table by a regular process; but it has become a fad of late with a few people to put crystals of native rock-salt on their tables; and they decidedly look very pretty, and have a certain distinctive flavour of their own that is not unpleasant.

Our English salt supply is chiefly derived from the Cheshire and Worcestershire salt-regions, which are of triassic age. Many of the places at which the salt is mined have names ending in *wich*, such as Northwich, Middlewich, Nantwich, Droitwich, Netherwich, and Shirleywich. This termination *wich* is itself curiously significant, as Mr. Isaac Taylor has shown, of the necessary connection between salt and the sea. The earliest known way of producing salt was of course in shallow pans on the sea-shore, at the bottom of a shoal bay, called in Norse and early English a wick or wich; and the material so produced is still known in trade as bay-salt. By-and-by, when people came to discover the inland brine pits and salt mines, they transferred to them the familiar name, a wich; and the places where the salt was manufactured came to be known as wych-houses. Droitwich, for example, was originally such a wich, where the droits or dues on salt were paid at the time when William the Conqueror's commissioners drew up their great survey for Domesday Book. But the good easy-going mediæval people who gave these quaint names to the inland wiches had probably no idea that they were really and truly dried-up bays, and that the salt they mined from their pits was genuine ancient bay-salt, the deposit of an old inland sea, evaporated by slow degrees a countless number of ages since, exactly as the Dead Sea and the Great Salt Lake are getting evaporated in our own time.

Such nevertheless is actually the case. A good-sized Caspian used to spread across the centre of England and north of Ireland in triassic times, bounded here and there, as well as Dr. Hull can make out, by the Welsh Mountains, the Cheviots, and the Donegal Hills, and with the Peak of Derbyshire and the Isle of Man standing out as separate islands from its blue expanse. (We will beg the question that the English seas were then blue. They are certainly marked so in a very fine cerulean tint on Dr. Hull's map of Triassic Britain.) Slowly, like most other inland seas, this early British Caspian began to lose weight and to shrivel away to ever smaller dimensions. In Devonshire, where it appears to have first dried up, we get no salt, but only red marl, with here

and there a cubical cast, filling a hole once occupied by rock-salt, though the percolation of the rain has long since melted out that very soluble substance, and replaced it by a mere mould in the characteristic square shape of salt crystals. But Worcestershire and Cheshire were the seat of the inland sea when it had contracted to the dimensions of a mere salt lake, and begun to throw down its dissolved saline materials. One of the Cheshire beds is sometimes a hundred feet thick of almost pure and crystalline rock-salt. The absence of fossils shows that animals must have had as bad a time of it there as in the Dead Sea of our modern Palestine.

The Droitwich brine-pits have been known for many centuries, since they were worked (and taxed) even before the Norman Conquest, as were many other similar wells elsewhere. But the actual mining of rock-salt as such in England dates back only as far as the reign of King Charles II. of blessed memory, or more definitely to the very year in which the 'Pilgrim's Progress' was conceived and written by John Bunyan. During that particular summer, an enterprising person at Nantwich had sunk a shaft for coal, which he failed to find; but on his way down he came unexpectedly across the bed of rock-salt, then for the first time discovered as a native mineral. Since that fortunate accident, the beds have been so energetically worked and the springs so energetically pumped that some of the towns built on top of them have got undermined, and now threaten from year to year, in the most literal sense, to cave in. In fact, one or two subsidences of considerable extent have already taken place, due in part, no doubt, to the dissolving action of rain-water, but in part also to the mode of working. The mines are approached by a shaft; and when you get down to the level of the old sea bottom, you find yourself in a sort of artificial gallery, whose roof, with all the world on top of it, is supported every here and there by massive pillars, about fifteen feet thick. Considering that the salt lies often a hundred and fifty yards deep, and that these pillars have to bear the weight of all that depth of solid rock, it is not surprising that subsidences should sometimes occur in abandoned shafts, where the water is allowed to collect, and slowly dissolve away the supporting columns.

Salt is a necessary article of food for animals, but in a far less degree than is commonly supposed. Each of us eats on an average about ten times as much salt as we actually require. In this



respect popular notions are as inexact as in the very similar case of the supply of phosphorus. Because phosphorus is needful for brain action, people jump forthwith to the absurd conclusion that fish and other foods rich in phosphates ought to be specially good for students preparing for examination, great thinkers, and literary men. Mark Twain indeed once advised a poetical aspirant, who sent him a few verses for his critical opinion, that fish was very feeding for the brains: he would recommend a couple of young whales, to begin upon. As a matter of fact, there is more phosphorus in our daily bread than would have sufficed Shakespeare to write 'Hamlet,' or Newton to discover the law of gravitation. It isn't phosphorus that most of us need, but brains to burn it in. A man might as well light a fire in a carriage, because coal makes an engine go, as hope to mend the pace of his dull pate by eating fish for the sake of the phosphates.

The question still remains, How did the salt originally get there? After all, when we say that it was produced, as rock-salt, by evaporation of the water in inland seas, we leave unanswered the main problem, How did the brine in solution get into the sea at all in the first place? Well, one might almost as well ask, How did anything come to be upon the earth at any time, in any way? How did the sea itself get there? How did this planet swim into existence at all? In the Indian mythology the world is supported upon the back of an elephant, who is supported upon the back of a tortoise; but what the tortoise in the last resort is supported upon the Indian philosophers prudently say not. If we once begin thus pushing back our inquiries into the genesis of the cosmos, we shall find our search retreating step after step *ad infinitum*. The negro preacher, describing the creation of Adam, and drawing slightly upon his imagination, observed that when our prime forefather first came to consciousness he found himself 'sot up agin a fence.' One of his hearers ventured sceptically to ejaculate, 'Den whar dat fence come from, ministah?' The outraged divine scratched his grey wool reflectively for a moment, and replied, after a pause, with stern solemnity, 'Tree more ob dem questions will undermine de whole system ob theology.'

However, we are not permitted humbly to imitate the prudent reticence of the Indian philosophers. In these days of evolution hypotheses, and nebular theories, and kinetic energy, and all the rest of it, the question why the sea is salt rises up irrepressible



and imperatively demands to get itself answered. There was a sapient inquirer, recently deceased, who had a short way out of this difficulty. He held that the sea was only salt because of all the salt rivers that ran into it. Considering that the salt rivers are themselves salted by passing through salt regions, or being fed by saline springs, all of which derive their saltiness from deposits laid down long ago by evaporation from earlier seas or lake basins, this explanation savours somewhat of circularity. It amounts in effect to saying that the sea is salt because of the large amount of saline matter which it holds in solution. Cheese is also a caseous preparation of milk; the duties of an archdeacon are to perform archidiaconal functions; and opium puts one to sleep because it possesses a soporific virtue.

Apart from such purely verbal explanations of the saltiness of the sea, however, one can only give some such account of the way it came to be 'the briny' as the following:—

This world was once a haze of fluid light, as the poets and the men of science agree in informing us. As soon as it began to cool down a little, the heavier materials naturally sank towards the centre, while the lighter, now represented by the ocean and the atmosphere, floated in a gaseous condition on the outside. But the great envelope of vapour thus produced did not consist merely of the constituents of air and water: many other gases and vapours mingled with them, as they still do to a far less extent in our existing atmosphere. By-and-by, as the cooling and condensing process continued, the water settled down from the condition of steam into one of a liquid at a dull red heat. As it condensed, it carried down with it a great many other substances, held in solution, whose component elements had previously existed in the primitive gaseous atmosphere. Thus the early ocean which covered the whole earth was in all probability not only very salt, but also quite thick with other mineral matters close up to the point of saturation. It was full of lime, and raw flint, and sulphates, and many other miscellaneous bodies. Moreover, it was not only just as salt as at the present day, but even a great deal saltier. For from that time to this evaporation has constantly been going on in certain shallow isolated areas, laying down great beds of gypsum and then of salt, which still remain in the solid condition, while the water has, of course, been correspondingly purified. The same thing has likewise happened in a slightly different way with the lime and flint, which have been

separated from the water chiefly by living animals, and afterwards deposited on the bottom of the ocean in immense layers as limestone, chalk, sandstone, and clay.

Thus it turns out that in the end all our sources of salt-supply are alike ultimately derived from the briny ocean. Whether we dig it out as solid rock-salt from the open quarries of the Punjaub, or pump it up from brine-wells sunk into the triassic rocks of Cheshire, or evaporate it direct in the salt-pans of England and the shallow *salines* of the Mediterranean shore, it is still at bottom essentially sea-salt. However distant the connection may seem, our salt is always in the last resort obtained from the material held in solution in some ancient or modern sea. Even the saline springs of Canada and the Northern States of America, where the wapiti love to congregate, and the noble hunter lurks in the thicket to murder them unperceived, derive their saltiness, as an able Canadian geologist has shown, from the thinly scattered salts still retained among the sediments of that very archaic sea whose precipitates form the earliest known life-bearing rocks. To the Homeric Greek, as to Mr. Dick Swiveller, the ocean was always the briny; to modern science, on the other hand (which neither of those worthies would probably have appreciated at its own valuation), the briny is always the oceanic. The fossil food which we find to-day on all our dinner-tables dates back its origin primarily to the first seas that ever covered the surface of our planet, and secondarily to the great rock deposits of the dried-up triassic inland sea. And yet even our men of science habitually describe that ancient mineral as common salt.

## A CHEAP NIGGER.

### I.



‘HAVE you seen the “Clayville Dime”?’

Moore chuckled me a very shabby little sheet of printed matter. It fluttered feebly in the warm air, and finally dropped on my recumbent frame. I was lolling in a hammock in the shade of the verandah.

I did not feel much inclined for study, but I picked up the ‘Clayville Dime’ and lazily glanced

at that periodical, while Moore relapsed into the pages of Ixtlilochtl. He was a literary character for a planter, had been educated at Oxford (where I made his acquaintance), and had inherited from his father, with a large collection of Indian and Mexican curiosities, a taste for the ancient history of the New World.

Sometimes I glanced at the newspaper, sometimes I looked out at the pleasant Southern garden, where the fountain flashed and fell among weeping willows, and laurels, orange trees, and myrtles.

‘Hullo!’ I cried suddenly, disturbing Moore’s Aztec researches, ‘here is a queer affair in the usually quiet town of Clayville. Listen to this;’ and I read aloud the following ‘par,’ as I believe paragraphs are styled in newspaper offices:—

“*Instinct and Accident.*—As Colonel Randolph was driving through our town yesterday and was passing Captain Jones’s ‘sample-room,’ where the Colonel lately shot Moses Widlake in the street, the horses took alarm and started violently down hill. The Colonel kept his seat till rounding the corner by the Clayville Bank, when his wheels came into collision with that edifice, and our gallant fownsmen was violently shot out. He is now lying in a very precarious condition. This may relieve Tom Widlake of the duty of

shooting the Colonel in revenge for his father. It is commonly believed that Colonel Randolph's horses were maddened by the smell of the blood which has dried up where old Widlake was shot. Much sympathy is felt for the Colonel. Neither of the horses was injured."

'Clayville appears to be a lively kind of place,' I said. 'Do you often have shootings down here?'

'We do,' said Moore, rather gravely; 'it is one of our institutions with which I could dispense.'

'And do you "carry iron," as the Greeks used to say, or "go heeled," as you citizens express it?'

'No, I don't; neither pistol nor knife. If anyone shoots me, he shoots an unarmed man. The local bullies know it, and they have some scruple about shooting in that case. Besides, they know I am an awkward customer at close quarters.'

Moore relapsed into his Mexican historian, and I into the newspaper.

'Here is a chance of seeing one of your institutions at last,' I said.

I had found an advertisement concerning a lot of negroes to be sold that very day by public auction in Clayville.

'Well, I suppose you ought to see it,' said Moore rather reluctantly. He was gradually emancipating his own servants, as I knew, and was even suspected of being a director of 'the Underground Railroad' to Canada.

'Peter,' he cried, 'will you be good enough to saddle three horses and bring them round?'

Peter, a 'darkey boy' who had been hanging about in the garden, grinned and went off. He was a queer fellow, Peter, a plantation humourist, well taught in all the then unpublished lore of 'Uncle Remus.' Peter had a way of his own, too, with animals, and often aided Moore in collecting objects of natural history.

'Did you get me those hornets, Peter?' said Moore when the black returned with the horses.

'Got 'em safe, massa, in a little box,' replied Peter, who then mounted and followed at a respectful distance as our squire.

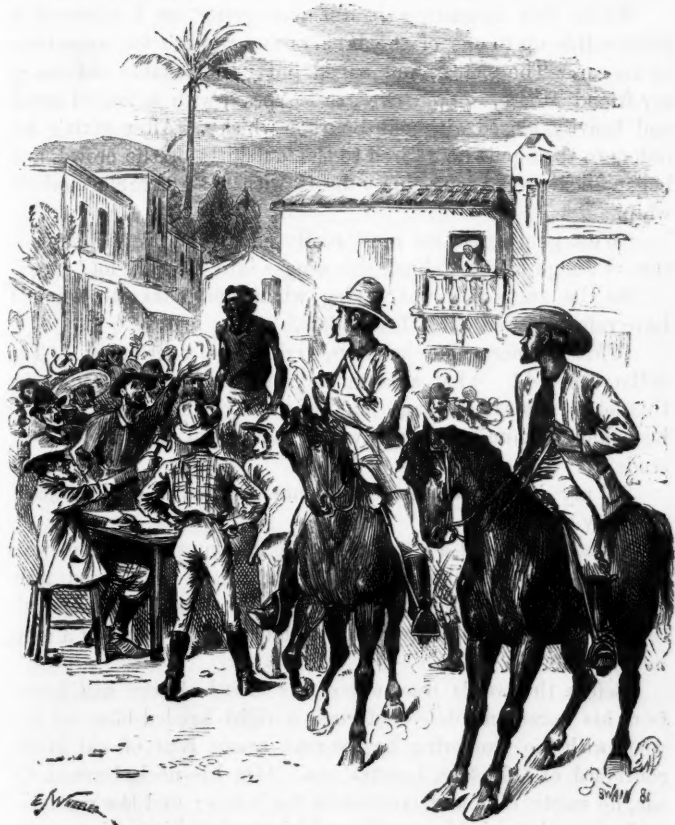
Without many more words we rode into the forest which lay between Clayville and Moore's plantation. Through the pine barrens ran the road, and on each side of the way was luxuriance of flowering creepers. The sweet faint scent of the white jessamine and the homely fragrance of honeysuckle filled the air, and the wild white roses were in perfect blossom. Here and there an

aloe reminded me that we were not at home, and dwarf palms and bayonet palmettoes, with the small pointed leaf of the 'live oak,' combined to make the scenery look foreign and unfamiliar. There was a soft haze in the air, and the sun's beams only painted, as it were, the capitals of the tall pillar-like pines, while the road was canopied and shaded by the skeins of grey moss that hung thickly on all the boughs.

The trees grew thinner as the road approached the town. Dusty were the ways, and sultry the air, when we rode into Clayville and were making for 'the noisy middle marketplace.' Clayville was but a small border town, though it could then boast the presence of a squadron of cavalry, sent there to watch the 'border ruffians.' The square was neither large nor crowded, but the spectacle was strange and interesting to me. Men who had horses or carts to dispose of were driving or riding about, noisily proclaiming the excellence of their wares. But buyers were more concerned, like myself, with the slave market. In the open air, in the middle of the place, a long table was set. The crowd gathered round this, and presented types of various sorts of citizens. The common 'mean white' was spitting and staring—a man fallen so low that he had no nigger to wallop, and was thus even more abject, because he had no natural place and functions in local society, than the slaves themselves. The local drunkard was uttering sagacities to which no mortal attended. Two or three speculators were bidding on commission, and there were a few planters, some of them mounted, and a mixed multitude of tradesmen, loafers, bar-keepers, newspaper reporters, and idlers in general. At either end of the long table sat an auctioneer, who behaved with the traditional facetiousness of the profession. As the 'lots' came on for sale they mounted the platform, generally in family parties. A party would fetch from one thousand to fifteen hundred dollars, according to its numbers and 'condition.' The spectacle was painful and monstrous. Most of the 'lots' bore the examination of their points with a kind of placid dignity, and only showed some little interest when the biddings grew keen and flattered their pride.

The sale was almost over, and we were just about to leave, when a howl of derision from the mob made us look round. What I saw was the apparition of an extremely aged and debilitated black man standing on the table. What Moore saw to interest him I could not guess, but he grew pale and uttered an oath of

surprise under his breath, though he rarely swore. Then he turned his horse's head again towards the auctioneer. That merry tradesman was extolling the merits of nearly his last lot. 'A very remarkable specimen, gentlemen! Admirers of the



antique cannot dispense with this curious nigger—very old and quite imperfect. Like so many of the treasures of Greek art which have reached us, he has had the misfortune to lose his nose and several of his fingers. How much offered for this exceptional lot—unmarried and without encumbrances of any kind? He is dumb too, and may be trusted with any secret.'

'Take him off!' howled some one in the crowd.

'Order his funeral!'

'Chuck him into the next lot.'

What, gentlemen, *no* bids for this very eligible nigger? With a few more rags he would make a most adequate scarecrow.'

While this disgusting banter was going on I observed a planter ride up to one of the brokers and whisper for some time in his ear. The planter was a bad but unmistakable likeness of my friend Moore, worked over, so to speak, with a loaded brush and heavily glazed with old Bourbon whisky. After giving his orders to the agent he retired to the outskirts of the crowd, and began flicking his long dusty boots with a serviceable cowhide whip.

'Well, gentlemen, we must really adopt the friendly suggestion of Judge Lee and chuck this nigger into the next lot.'

So the auctioneer was saying, when the broker to whom I have referred cried out, 'Ten dollars.'

'*This* is more like business,' cried the auctioneer. 'Ten dollars offered! What amateur says more than ten dollars for this lot? His extreme age and historical reminiscences alone, if he could communicate them, would make him invaluable to the student.'

To my intense amazement Moore shouted from horseback, 'Twenty dollars.'

'What, *you* want a cheap nigger to get your hand in, do you, you blank-blanked abolitionist?' cried a man who stood near. He was a big, dirty-looking bully, at least half drunk, and attending (not unnecessarily) to his toilet with the point of a long, heavy knife.

Before the words were out of his mouth Moore had leaped from his horse and delivered such a right-handed blow as that wherewith the wandering beggar man smote Irus of old in the courtyard of Odysseus, Laertes' son. 'On his neck, beneath the ear, he smote him, and crushed in the bones; and the red blood gushed up through his mouth, and he gnashed his teeth together as he kicked the ground.' Moore stooped, picked up the bowie knife, and sent it glittering high through the air.

'Take him away,' he said, and two rough fellows, laughing, carried the bully to the edge of the fountain that played in the corner of the square. He was still lying crumpled up there when we rode out of Clayville.



The biddings, of course, had stopped, owing to the unaffected interest which the public took in this more dramatic interlude. The broker, it is true, had bid twenty-five dollars, and was wrangling with the auctioneer.

'You have my bid, Mr. Brinton, sir, and there is no other offer. Knock down the lot to me.'

'You wait your time, Mr. Isaacs,' said the auctioneer. 'No man can do two things at once and do them well. When Squire Moore has settled with Dick Bligh he will desert the paths of military adventure for the calmer and more lucrative track of commercial enterprise.'

The auctioneer's command of long words was considerable, and was obviously of use to him in his daily avocations.

When he had rounded his period Moore was in the saddle again, and nodded silently to the auctioneer.

'Squire Moore bids thirty dollars. Thirty dollars for this once despised but now appreciated fellow-creature,' rattled on the auctioneer.

The agent nodded again.

'Forty dollars bid,' said the auctioneer.

'Fifty,' cried Moore.

The broker nodded.

'Sixty.'

The agent nodded again.

The bidding ran rapidly up to three hundred and fifty dollars.

The crowd were growing excited, and had been joined by every child in the town, by every draggled and sun-burnt woman, and the drinking bar had disgorged every loafer who felt sober enough to stay the distance to the centre of the square.

My own first feelings of curiosity had subsided. I knew how strong and burning was Moore's hatred of oppression, and felt convinced that he merely wished at any sacrifice of money to secure for this old negro some peaceful days and a quiet death-bed.

The crowd doubtless took the same obvious view of the case as I did, and was now eagerly urging on the two competitors.

'Never say die, Isaacs.'

'Stick to it, Squire; the nigger's well worth the dollars.'

So they howled, and now the biddings were mounting towards one thousand dollars, when the sulky planter rode up to the neighbourhood of the table—much to the inconvenience of the 'gallery'—and whispered to his agent. The conference lasted

some minutes, and at the end of it the agent capped Moore's last offer, 1,000 dollars, with a bid of 1,200.

'Fifteen hundred,' said Moore amidst applause.

'Look here, Mr. Knock-'em-down,' cried Mr. Isaacs: 'it's hot and thirsty work sitting nodding here; I likes my ease on a warm day; so just you reckon that I see the Squire, and go 100 dollars more as long as I hold up my pencil.'

He stuck a long gnawed pencil erect between his finger and thumb, and stared impertinently at Moore. The Squire nodded, and the bidding went on in this silent fashion till the bids had actually run up to three thousand four hundred dollars. All this while the poor negro, whose limbs no longer supported him, crouched in a heap on the table, turning his haggard eye alternately on Moore and on the erect and motionless pencil of the broker. The crowd had become silent with excitement. Unable to stand the heat and agitation, Moore's unfriendly brother had crossed the square in search of a 'short drink.' Moore nodded once more.

'Three thousand six hundred dollars bid,' cried the auctioneer, and looked at Isaacs.

With a wild howl Isaacs dashed his pencil in the air, tossed up his hands, and thrust them deep down between his coat collar and his body, uttering all the while yells of pain.

'Don't you bid, Mr. Isaacs?' asked the auctioneer, without receiving any answer except Semitic appeals to holy Abraham, blended with Aryan profanity.

'Come,' said Moore very severely, 'his pencil is down, and he has withdrawn his bid. There is no other bidder; knock the lot down to me.'

'No more offers?' said the auctioneer slowly, looking all round the square.

There were certainly no offers from Mr. Isaacs, who now was bounding like the gad-stung Io to the furthest end of the place.

'This fine buck-negro, warranted absolutely unsound of wind and limb, going, going, a shameful sacrifice, for a poor three thousand seven hundred dollars. Going, going—gone!'

The hammer fell with a sharp, decisive sound.

A fearful volley of oaths rattled after the noise, like thunder rolling away in the distance.

Moore's brother had returned from achieving a 'short drink' just in time to see his coveted lot knocked down to his rival.

We left the spot, with the negro in the care of Peter, as quickly as might be.

'I wonder,' said Moore, as we reached the inn and ordered a trap to carry our valuable bargain home in, 'I wonder what on earth made Isaacs run off like a maniac.'

'Massa,' whispered Peter, 'yesterday I jes' caught yer Brer Hornet a-loafin' around in the wood. "Come wi' me," says I, and bottled him in this yer pasteboard box,' showing one which had held Turkish tobacco. 'When I saw that Hebrew Jew wouldn't stir his pencil, I jes' crept up softly and dropped Brer Hornet down his neck. Then he jes' rose and went. Spec's he and Brer Hornet had business of their own.'

'Peter,' said Moore, 'you are a good boy, but you will come to a bad end.'

## II.

As we rode slowly homeward, behind the trap which conveyed the dear-bought slave, Moore was extremely moody and disinclined for conversation.

'Is your purchase not rather an expensive one?' I ventured to ask, to which Moore replied shortly—

'No; think he is perhaps the cheapest nigger that was ever bought.'

To put any more questions would have been impertinent, and I possessed my curiosity in silence till we reached the plantation.

Here Moore's conduct became decidedly eccentric. He had the black man conveyed at once into a cool, dark, strong room with a heavy iron door, where the new acquisition was locked up in company with a sufficient meal. Moore and I dined hastily, and then he summoned all his negroes together into the court of the house. 'Look here, boys,' he cried: 'all these trees'—and he pointed to several clumps—'must come down immediately, and all the shrubs on the lawn and in the garden. Fall to at once, those of you that have axes, and let the rest take hoes and knives and make a clean sweep of the shrubs.' The idea of wholesale destruction seemed not disagreeable to the slaves, who went at their work with eagerness, though it made my heart ache to see the fine old oaks beginning to fall and to watch the green garden becoming a desert. Moore first busied himself with directing the women, who, under his orders, piled up mattresses and bags of cotton against the parapets of the verandahs. The house stood on

the summit of a gradually sloping height, and before the moon began to set (for we worked without intermission through the evening and far into the night) there was nothing but a bare slope of grass all round the place, while smoke and flame went up from the piles of fallen timber. The plantation, in fact, was ready to stand a short siege.

Moore now produced a number of rifles, which he put, with ammunition, into the hands of some of the more stalwart negroes. These he sent to their cabins, which lay at a distance of about a furlong and a half on various sides of the house. The men had orders to fire on any advancing enemy, and then to fall back at once on the main building, which was now barricaded and fortified. One lad was told to lurk in a thicket below the slope of the hill and invisible from the house.

'If Wild Bill's men come on, and you give them the slip, cry thrice like the "Bob White,"' said Moore; 'if they take you, cry once. If you get off run straight to Clayville, and give this note to the officer commanding the cavalry.'

The hour was now about one in the morning; by three the dawn would begin. In spite of his fatigues, Moore had no idea of snatching an hour's rest. He called up Peter (who had been sleeping, coiled up like a black cat, in the smoking-room), and bade him take a bath and hot water into the room where Gumbo, the newly purchased black, had all this time been left to his own reflections. 'Soap him and lather him well, Peter,' said Moore; 'wash him white, if you can, and let me know when he's fit to come near.'

Peter withdrew with his stereotyped grin to make his preparations.

Presently, through the open door of the smoking-room, we heard the sounds of energetic splashings, mingled with the inarticulate groans of the miserable Gumbo. Moore could not sit still, but kept pacing the room, smoking fiercely. Presently Peter came to the door—

'Nigger's clean now, massa.'

'Bring me a razor, then,' said Moore, '*and leave me alone with him.*'

When Moore had retired, with the razor, into the chamber where his purchase lay, I had time to reflect on the singularity of the situation. In every room loaded rifles were ready; all the

windows were cunningly barricaded, and had sufficient loopholes. The peaceful planter's house had become a castle; a dreadful quiet had succeeded to the hubbub of preparation, and my host, yesterday so pleasant, was now locked up alone with a dumb negro and a razor! I had long ago given up the hypothesis that Gumbo had been purchased out of pure philanthropy. The disappointment of baffled cruelty in Moore's brother would not alone account for the necessity of such defensive preparations as had just been made. Clearly Gumbo was not a mere fancy article, but a negro of real value, whose person it was desirable to obtain possession of at any risk or cost. The ghastly idea occurred to me (suggested, I fancy, by Moore's demand for a razor) that Gumbo, at some period of his career, must have swallowed a priceless diamond. This gem must still be concealed about his person, and Moore must have determined by foul means, as no fair means were available, to become its owner. When this fancy struck me I began to feel that it was my duty to interfere. I could not sit by within call (had poor Gumbo been capable of calling) and allow my friend to commit such a deed of cruelty. As I thus parleyed with myself, the heavy iron door of the store-room opened, and Moore came out, with the razor (bloodless, thank Heaven!) in his hand. Anxiety had given place to a more joyous excitement.

'Well?' I said interrogatively.

'Well, all's well. That man has, as I felt sure, the Secret of the Pyramid.'

I now became quite certain that Moore, in spite of all his apparent method, had gone out of his mind. It seemed best to humour him, especially as so many loaded rifles were lying about.

'He has seen the myst'ry hid  
Under Egypt's pyramid,'

I quoted; 'but, my dear fellow, as the negro is dumb, I don't see how you are to get the secret out of him.'

'I did not say he *knew* it,' answered Moore crossly; 'I said he *had* it. As to Egypt, I don't know what you are talking about —'

At this moment we heard the crack of rifles, and in the instant of silence which followed came the note of the 'Bob White.'

Once it shrilled, and we listened eagerly; then the notes came twice rapidly, and a sound of voices rose up from the negro

outposts, who had been driven in and were making fast the one door of the house that had been left open. From the negroes we learned that our assailants (Bill Hicock's band of border ruffians, 'specially engaged for this occasion') had picketed their horses behind the dip of the hill and were advancing on foot. Moore hurried to the roof to reconnoitre. The dawn was stealing on,



and the smoke from the still smouldering trees, which we had felled and burned, rose through the twilight air.

'Moore, you hound,' cried a voice through the smoke of the furthest pile, 'we have come for your nigger. Will you give him up or will you fight?'

Moore's only reply was a bullet fired in the direction whence the voice was heard. His shot was answered by a perfect volley from men who could just be discerned creeping through the grass about four hundred yards out. The bullets rattled harm-

lessly against wooden walls and iron shutters, or came with a thud against the mattress fortifications of the verandah. The firing was all directed against the front of the house.

'I see their game,' said Moore. 'The front attack is only a feint. When they think we are all busy here, another detachment will try to rush the place from the back and to set fire to the building. We'll "give them their kail through the reek."'

Moore's dispositions were quickly made. He left me with some ten of the blacks to keep up as heavy a fire as possible from the roof against the advancing skirmishers. He posted himself, with six fellows on whom he could depend, in a room of one of the wings which commanded the back entrance. As many men, with plenty of ready-loaded rifles, were told off to a room in the opposite wing. Both parties were thus in a position to rake the entrance with a cross fire. Moore gave orders that not a trigger should be pulled till the still invisible assailants had arrived between the two projecting wings. 'Then fire into them, and let everyone choose his man.'

On the roof our business was simple enough. We lay behind bags of cotton, firing as rapidly and making as much show of force as possible, while women kept loading for us. Our position was extremely strong, as we were quite invisible to men crouching or running hurriedly far below. Our practice was not particularly good; still three or four of the skirmishers had ceased to advance, and this naturally discouraged the others, who were aware, of course, that their movement was only a feint. The siege had now lasted about half an hour, and I had begun to fancy that Moore's theory of the attack was a mistake, and that he had credited the enemy with more generalship than they possessed, when a perfect storm of fire broke out beneath us, from the rooms where Moore and his company were posted. Dangerous as it was to cease for a moment from watching the enemy, I stole across the roof, and looking down between two of the cotton bags which filled the open spaces of the balustrades, I saw the narrow ground between the two wings simply strewn with dead or wounded men. The cross fire still poured from the windows, though here and there a marksman tried to pick off the fugitives. Rapidly did I cross the roof to my post. To my horror the skirmishers had advanced, as if at the signal of the firing, and were now running up at full speed and close to the walls of the house. At that moment the door opened, and Moore, heading a number of



negroes, picked off the leading ruffian and rushed out into the open. The other assailants fired hurriedly and without aim, then—daunted by the attack so suddenly carried into their midst, and by the appearance of one or two of their own beaten comrades—the enemy turned and fairly bolted. We did not pursue. Far away down the road we heard the clatter of hoofs, and thin and clear came the thrice-repeated cry of the ‘Bob White.’

‘Dick’s coming back with the soldiers,’ said Moore; ‘and now I think we may look after the wounded.’

I did not see much of Moore that day. The fact is that I slept a good deal, and Moore was mysteriously engaged with Gumbo. Night came, and very much needed quiet and sleep came with it. Then we passed an indolent day, and I presumed that adventures were over, and that on the subject of ‘the Secret of the Pyramid’ Moore had recovered his sanity. I was just taking my bedroom candle when Moore said, ‘Don’t go to bed yet. You will come with me, won’t you, and see out the adventure of the Cheap Nigger?’

‘You don’t mean to say the story is to be continued?’ I asked.

‘Continued? Why the fun is only beginning,’ Moore answered. ‘The night is cloudy, and will just suit us. Come down to the branch.’

The ‘branch,’ as Moore called it, was a strong stream that separated, as I knew, his lands from his brother’s. We walked down slowly, and reached the broad boat which was dragged over by a chain when anyone wanted to cross. At the ‘scow,’ as the ferry-boat was called, Peter joined us; he ferried us deftly over the deep and rapid water, and then led on, as rapidly as if it had been daylight, along a path through the pines.

‘How often I came here when I was a boy,’ said Moore; ‘but now I might lose myself in the wood, for this is my brother’s land, and I have forgotten the way.’

As I knew that Mr. Bob Moore was confined to his room by an accident, through which an ounce of lead had been lodged in a portion of his frame, I had no fear of being arrested for trespass. Presently the negro stopped in front of a cliff.

‘Here is the “Sachem’s Cave,”’ said Moore. ‘You’ll help us to explore the cave, won’t you?’

I did not think the occasion an opportune one for exploring

caves, but to have withdrawn would have demanded a 'moral courage,' as people commonly say when they mean cowardice, which I did not possess. We stepped within a narrow crevice of the great cliff. Moore lit a lantern and went in advance; the negro followed with a flaring torch.

Suddenly an idea occurred to me, which I felt bound to communicate to Moore. 'My dear fellow,' I said in a whisper, 'is this quite sportsmanlike? You know you are after some treasure, real or imaginary, and, I put it to you as a candid friend, is not this just a little bit like poaching? Your brother's land, you know.'

'What I am looking for is in my own land,' said Moore. 'The river is the march. Come on.'

We went on, now advancing through fairy halls, glistening with stalactites or paved with silver sand, and finally pushing our way through a concealed crevice down dank and narrow passages in the rock. The darkness increased; the pavement plashed beneath our feet, and the drip, drip of water was incessant. 'We are under the river-bed,' said Moore, 'in a kind of natural Thames Tunnel.' We made what speed we might through this combination of the Valley of the Shadow with the Slough of Despond, and soon were on firmer ground again beneath Moore's own territory. Probably no other white men had ever crawled through the hidden passage and gained the further penetralia of the cave, which now again began to narrow. Finally we reached four tall pillars, of about ten feet in height, closely surrounded by the walls of rock. As we approached these pillars, that were dimly discerned by the torchlight, our feet made a faint metallic jingling sound among heaps of ashes which strewed the floor. Moore and I went up to the pillars and tried them with our knives. They were of wood, all soaked and green with the eternal damp. 'Peter,' said Moore, 'go in with the lantern and try if you can find anything there.'

Peter had none of the superstitions of his race, or he would never have been our companion. 'All right, massa; me look for Brer Spook.'

So saying Peter walked into a kind of roofed over-room, open only at the front, and examined the floor with his lantern, stamping occasionally to detect any hollowness in the ground.

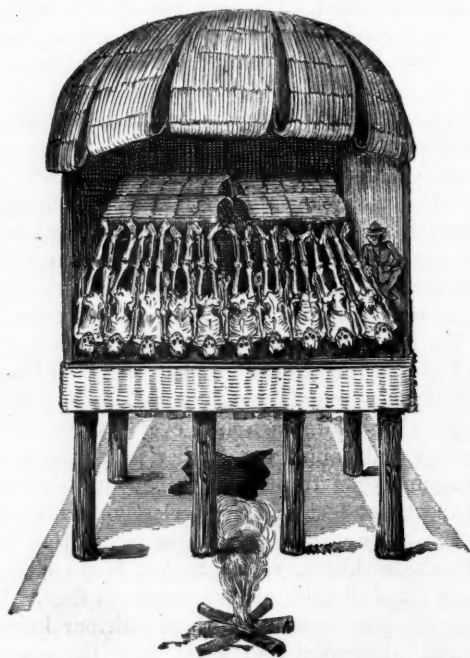
'Nothing here, massa, but this dead fellow's leg-bone and little

bits of broken jugs,' and the dauntless Peter came out with his ghastly trophy.

Moore seemed not to lose heart.

'Perhaps,' he said, 'there is something on the roof. Peter, give me a back.'

Peter stooped down beside one of the wooden pillars and firmly grasped his own legs above the knee. Moore climbed on



the improvised ladder, and was just able to seize the edge of the roof, as it seemed to be, with his hands.

'Now steady, Peter,' he exclaimed, and with a spring he drew himself up till his head was above the level of the roof. Then he uttered a cry, and, leaping from Peter's back, retreated to the level where we stood in some confusion.

'Good God!' he said, 'what a sight!'

'What on earth is the matter?' I asked.

'Look for yourself, if you choose,' said Moore, who was somewhat shaken, and at the same time irritated and ashamed.

Grasping the lantern, I managed to get on to Peter's shoulders, and by a considerable gymnastic effort to raise my head to the level of the ledge, and at the same time to cast the light up and within.

The spectacle was sufficiently awful.

I was looking along a platform, on which ten skeletons were disposed at full length, with the skulls still covered with long hair, and the fleshless limbs glimmering white and stretching back into the darkness.

On the right hand, and crouching between a skeleton and the wall of the chamber (what we had taken for a roof was the floor of a room raised on pillars), I saw the form of a man. He was dressed in gay colours, and, as he sat with his legs drawn up, his arms rested on his knees.

On the first beholding of a dreadful thing, our instinct forces us to rush against it, as if to bring the horror to the test of touch. This instinct awakened in me. For a moment I felt dazed, and then I continued to stare involuntarily at the watcher of the dead. He had not stirred. My eyes became accustomed to the dim and flickering light which the lantern cast in that dark place.

'Hold on, Peter,' I cried, and leaped down to the floor of the cave.

'It's all right, Moore,' I said. 'Don't you remember the picture in old Lafitau's "*Mœurs des Sauvages Américains*"? We are in a burying-place of the Cherouines, and the seated man is only the *kywash*, "which is an image of woode keeping the deade."'

'Ass that I am!' cried Moore. 'I knew the cave led us from the Sachem's Cave to the Sachem's Mound, and I forgot for a moment how the fellows disposed of their dead. We must search the platform. Peter, make a ladder again.'

Moore mounted nimbly enough this time, and I followed him.

The *kywash* had no more terrors for us, and we penetrated beyond the fleshless dead into the further extremity of the sepulchre. Here we lifted and removed vast piles of deerskin bags, and of mats, filled as they were with 'the dreadful dust that once was man.' As we reached the bottom of the first pile something glittered yellow and bright beneath the lantern.

Moore stooped and tried to lift what looked like an enormous plate. He was unable to raise the object, still weighed down as it was with the ghastly remnants of the dead. With

feverish haste we cleared away the débris, and at last lifted and brought to light a huge and massive disk of gold, divided into rays which spread from the centre, each division being adorned with strange figures in relief—figures of animals, plants, and what looked like rude hieroglyphs.

This was only the firstfruits of the treasure.

A silver disk, still larger, and decorated in the same manner, was next uncovered, and last, in a hollow dug in the flooring of the sepulchre, we came on a great number of objects in gold and silver, which somewhat reminded us of Indian idols. These were thickly crusted with precious stones, and were accompanied by many of the sacred emeralds and opals of old American religion. There were also some extraordinary manuscripts, if the term may be applied to picture writing on prepared deerskins that were now decaying. We paid little attention to cloaks of the famous feather-work, now a lost art, of which one or two examples are found in European museums. The gold, and silver, and precious stones, as may be imagined, overcame for the moment any ethnological curiosity.

Dawn was growing into day before we reached the mouth of the cave again, and after a series of journeys brought all our spoil to the light of the upper air. It was quickly enough bestowed in bags and baskets. Then, aided by three of Moore's stoutest hands, whom we found waiting for us in the pine wood, we carried the whole treasure back, and lodged it in the strong room which had been the retreat of Gumbo.

### III.

The conclusion of my story shall be very short. What was the connection between Gumbo and the spoils of the Sachem's Mound, and how did the treasures of the Aztec Temple of the Sun come to be concealed in the burial place of the Red Man? All this Moore explained to me the day after we secured the treasures.

'My father,' said Moore, 'was, as you know, a great antiquarian, and a great collector of Mexican and native relics. He had given almost as much time as Brasseur de Bourbourg to Mexican hieroglyphics, and naturally had made nothing out of them. His chief desire was to discover the Secret of the Pyramid—not the pyramids of Egypt, as you fancied, but the Pyramid of the Sun,

Tonatiuh, at Tehuacan. To the problem connected with this mysterious structure, infinitely older than the empire of Montezuma, which Cortes destroyed, he fancied he had a clue in this scroll.'

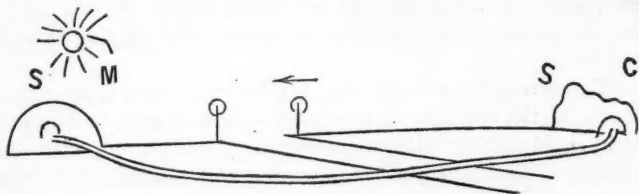
Moore handed me a prepared sheet of birch bark, like those which the red men use for their rude picture writings. It was very old, but the painted characters were still brilliant, and even a tyro could see that they were not Indian, but of the ancient Mexican description. In the upper left-hand corner was painted a pyramidal structure, above which the sun beamed. Eight men, over whose heads the moon was painted, were issuing from the pyramid; the two foremost bore in their hands effigies of the sun and moon; each of the others seemed to carry smaller objects with a certain religious awe. Then came a singular chart, which one might conjecture represented the wanderings of these men, bearing the sacred things of their gods. In the lowest corner of the scroll they were being received by human beings dressed unlike themselves, with head coverings of feathers and carrying bows in their hands.

'This scroll,' Moore went on, 'my father bought from one of the last of the red men who lingered on here, a prey to debt and whisky. My father always associated the drawings with the treasures of Tehuacan, which, according to him, must have been withdrawn from the pyramid, and conveyed secretly to the north, the direction from which the old Toltec pyramid builders originally came. In the north they would find no civilised people like themselves, he said, but only the Indians. Probably, however, the Indians would receive with respect the bearers of mysterious images and rites, and my father concluded that the sacred treasures of the Sun might still be concealed among some wandering tribe of red men. He had come to this conclusion for some time, when I and my brother returned from school, hastily summoned back, to find him extremely ill. He had suffered from a paralytic stroke, and he scarcely recognised us. But we made out, partly from his broken and wandering words, partly from old Tom (Peter's father, now dead), that my father's illness had followed on a violent fit of passion. He had picked up, it seems, from some Indians a scroll which he considered of the utmost value, and which he placed in a shelf of the library. Now, old Gumbo was a house servant at that time, and, dumb as he was, and stupid as he was, my father had treated him with peculiar

kindness. Unluckily Gumbo yielded to the favourite illusion of all servants, white and black, male and female, that anything they find in the library may be used to light a fire with. One chilly day Gumbo lighted the fire with the newly purchased Indian birch scroll. My father, when he heard of this performance, lost all self-command. In his ordinary temper the most humane of men, he simply raged at Gumbo. He would teach him, he said, to destroy his papers. And it appeared, from what we could piece together (for old Tom was very reticent and my father very incoherent), that he actually branded or tattooed a copy of what Gumbo had burnt on the nigger's body!

'But,' I interrupted, 'your father knew all the scroll had to tell him, else he could not have copied it on Gumbo. So why was he in such a rage.'

'You,' said Moore, with some indignation, 'are not a collector, and you can't understand a collector's feelings. My father knew



the contents of the scroll, but what of that? The scroll was the first edition, the real original, and Gumbo had destroyed it. Job would have lost his temper, if Job had been a collector. Let me go on. My brother and I both conjectured that the scroll had some connection with the famous riches of the Sun and the secret of the Pyramid of Teohuacan. Probably he thought it had contained a chart (now transferred to Gumbo's frame) of the hiding-place of the treasure. However, in the confusion caused by my father's illness, death, and burial, Gumbo escaped, and, being an unusually stupid nigger, he escaped due south-west. Here he seems to have fallen into the hands of some slave-holding Indians, who used him even worse than any white owners would have done, and left him the mere fragment you saw. He filtered back here through the exchange of commerce, and as soon as I recognised him at the sale I made up my mind to purchase him. So did my brother; but, thanks to Peter and his hornets, I became Gumbo's owner. On examining him, after he was well washed on the night



of the attack, I found this chart, as you may call it, branded on Gumbo's back.' Here Moore made a rapid tracing on a sheet of paper. 'I concluded that the letters S M (introduced by my father, of course, as the Indian scroll must have been "before letters") referred to the Sachem's Mound, which is in my land, that Sun above referred to the treasures of the Sun, that S C stood for the Sachem's Cave, and that the cave led, under the river, within the mound. We might have opened the mound by digging on our own land, but it would have been a long job, and must have attracted curiosity and brought us into trouble. So, you see, the chart Gumbo destroyed was imprinted by my father on his black back, and though he *knew* nothing of the secret he distinctly *had* it.'

'Yes,' said I, 'but why did you ask for a razor when you were left alone with Gumbo?'

'Why,' said Moore, 'I knew Gumbo was marked somewhere and somehow, but the place and manner I didn't know. And my father might have remembered the dodge of Histiaëus in Herodotus: he might have shaved Gumbo's head, tattooed the chart on that, and then allowed the natural covering to hide the secret "on the place where the wool ought to grow."'



### UNPARLIAMENTARY BOROUGHES.

THIS is not a political disquisition. I am not going to discourse of Redistribution, or to cite appalling instances of destitution of votes in large towns possessing a population of over 100,000 souls, all still sighing in vain by their own firesides for the one-hundred-thousandth fraction of a voice in the Great National Debating Club at Westminster. To say the truth, are we not all just a little weary at present of parliamentary boroughs? and is it not about time that the unparliamentary ones should have at last an innings of their own? Why this exclusive attention to the towns (mostly uninteresting) which are big enough to own a real live member all to themselves, and this cold shade of neglect cast so unworthily upon the pleasant and pretty out-of-the-way places which fail to come up to the modern standard of numerical and political significance? Birmingham might be easily cut up, no doubt, into four hundred and twenty boroughs quite as big as most of those which still bear that proud title in Dorset and Devon; but even supposing it were to be so divided, and accordingly mitigated (as a big polype often breaks up into a host of little ones), would any one of the aliquot parts thus produced be equal in interest to Shaftesbury or Modbury, to Lyme Regis or Kingsbridge? Besides, though such a scheme for the redistribution of Birmingham among the agricultural counties might be very nice for the Birmingham people themselves, would it not undeniably be very hard lines upon the agricultural counties among which the embryonic hardware villages would be redistributed?

In the first place, then, let us begin by inquiring, What is a borough?—just as Sir Robert Peel at once hopelessly befogged that distressful currency question by asking outright, What is a pound? Everybody who had a sovereign in his purse always firmly believed till that particular moment that he knew exactly what a pound meant: why, he had one actually there in his pocket. But iconoclastic Sir Robert dashed to pieces immediately the unsophisticated belief by merely asking that point-blank question; and from that day to this, nobody has ever been able satisfactorily to answer what a pound is, except by the mean and evasive subterfuge of replying, ‘Twenty shillings.’ It is

exactly the same with the definition of a borough. There are many specific forms of borough—the parliamentary borough, the municipal borough, the borough by prescription, and so forth, *ad infinitum*—which the hair-splitting ingenuity of the British lawyer has been able to define or to describe with sufficient rough accuracy for all practical purposes. But what is the meaning of a borough *per se*? What is the borough, viewed widely, not as parliamentary, or municipal, or so forth, but simply and solely as a borough in the abstract? That is a question in order to answer which we shall have to have recourse to the etymology and derivation of the word borough, burgh, or bury.

Now, etymology is notoriously a very slippery and deceptive subject. Voltaire said of it long ago, in a famous and oft-quoted epigram, that it was a science in which the vowels counted for nothing and the consonants for very little. But since Voltaire's time we have altered all that by modern improvements, and the proper spelling and pronunciation of borough has now become a question of national importance, embarrassing even the scanty leisure of her Majesty's Ministers at their places in the council of the nation. Only a very little time ago, Sir George Campbell, in Parliament assembled, asked—as I learn from a daily paper—'whether the Government would not consider the arrangement of a conference between English and Scotch members with the view of arriving at some compromise as to the spelling of the word "borough," and stopping the mispronunciation of the word "burgh" by the English members.' The putting of this plain and sensible question, I regret to say, was twice interrupted by unseemly laughter on the part of unsympathetic Southern members; but it is clear that the difficulty as to the spelling and pronunciation of the word borough on either side the border, having thus been brought within measurable distance of practical politics, must sooner or later be met and answered; and it is in order to prevent any untimely repeal of the Act of Union, or any hasty appearance of Sir George Campbell in the part of a modern William Wallace, that this paper is humbly offered as a contribution towards the partial solution of so momentous a national problem.

In its most primitive and fundamental acceptation, a borough is simply a fort or earthwork. The word is one of a large family of words, all of which have for their common ancestor a verb meaning to dig or delve. The verb itself takes various forms, as,

'to bury' and 'to burrow;' but its prime sense is that of throwing up earth, whether for the purpose of making a hole like a rabbit, or for that of raising a mound or earthwork like a civilised human being. The earth thus thrown up may be intended to cover the remains of a dead man, in which case the man is said to be buried, and the mound under which he rests is called a barrow. Or it may surround a stockaded village or primitive hill-fort, in which case the work is commonly known by this present title of a bury or borough.

It is from hill-forts of such an ancient and primitive kind that all our modern buries, burghs, and boroughs, however spelt, are lineally descended. In the old English tongue (I am afraid of calling it Anglo-Saxon, because I know if I were once to mention that awe-inspiring word you would at once leave off the perusal of this present article), a hill-fort, or a town fortified with earthworks, was called a *burh*, which fearsome combination of letters was pronounced exactly as Scotchmen still pronounce their native sound 'burgh,' and as Sir George Campbell will never persuade any modern English lips to pronounce it, even if he gets an Act of Parliament for that special purpose. All the other spellings and pronunciations are simply attempts on the part of modern tongues to get as near as possible by violent efforts to this harsh and barbaric early monstrosity. In Germany the word has generally hardened down simply into *burg*, as in Marburg, Homburg, Hamburg, and Magdeburg. In Scotland, it has retained its original roughness of burgh, as in Edinburgh, Jedburgh, and Roxburgh. In northern England, it usually softens into borough, as in Gainsborough, Middlesborough, and Loughborough. And in the south and west, it finally weakens into the very mitigated form of bury, as in Salisbury, Shaftesbury, and Bury St. Edmunds. Once only, so far as I know, it assumes in a place-name its alternative form of barrow, the form which it almost always keeps when applied to an ancient tomb or tumulus, and that is in the case of Barrow-in-Furness. A still odder and more incongruous shape is Brough, in Yorkshire, a sort of irregular north-country compromise between the English borough and the Scotch burgh, as if to keep the peace between the two countries.

The case of that particular part of South London which is still distinctively called the Borough throws a flood of light on the origin and meaning of the whole group of words with which

we are here cursorily dealing. Why *the* Borough in particular, one may naturally ask, when there are so many other undoubted boroughs all round it? What has this one individual borough done more than Finsbury, say, or Chelsea, that it should merit a definite article and a capital letter above all the other assorted boroughs, parliamentary or prescriptive, that spread about it in every direction? The answer to this obvious question carries us far back into the history of London—to the days when there was only one road across the river, by the primitive structure whose modern successor still bears the distinctive name of London Bridge. To guard the southern end of that important highway against our disagreeable thieving neighbours the Danes, the men of London built a *burh* or earthwork, a fortified *tête de pont*, in fact, on the Surrey side of the great river. The fort or bury thus erected was called indiscriminately the South Work—or, as we say nowadays, Southwark—and the *burh*, or, as we say nowadays, the Borough. The word in this sense means simply and solely the fort, the *tête de pont*, and is a good piece of archaic English surviving (with all its original signification lost) into the common speech of the nineteenth century.

The buries that lie scattered all over the face of the good old West Country also give one an excellent idea of the primitive hill-fort from which every modern borough is lineally descended. There are many villages in Wilts, Dorset, and Devon bearing such quaint old-world names as Musbury, Membury, Modbury, and Silbury. Above every one of these bury-named hamlets the inquiring traveller will find (if he chooses to climb to it) an old earthwork now known by the curious name of Musbury Castle or Membury Castle, as the case may be; for castle in the West Country is locally understood to mean, not a great ivy-covered Norman ruin, but the bare ridges of a far more ancient and grass-grown Celtic stronghold. So far as I know, there is no bury anywhere in the five western counties that hasn't got immediately overlooking it just such a mouldering old prehistoric earthwork. Originally, of course, the bury was the name of the earthwork itself, which was only slowly transferred to the newer village that grew up in later ages around the little Christian church on the slope of the hillside. There are dozens upon dozens of such very ancient western boroughs, each once the fortress of some little forgotten Celtic tribe, and each capping its own steep hill above the fertile valley of some minor streamlet. They were mere stockades, these

ancient buries, where those twin chattels, the women and the cows, might be driven for security in time of war; while in intervals of peace the tribe inhabited rather the unfortified village of wattled huts conveniently situated by the waterside below. Many of these old lingering buries occupy sites of famous antiquity, like Silbury, the most gigantic of British barrows, and Abury, 'a beautiful mushroom grown up at the expense of the Druidical circles in whose midst it nestles.' Very few, like Shaftesbury, continue to be still inhabited on their airy heights. Others, like Salisbury, once situated at Old Sarum, have come down from the precincts of the original earthwork to a more convenient position in the valley at its foot. This practical 'redistribution of seats' has affected almost all the hill-forts in southern England; the village which bears the name in bury generally standing below the earthwork to which it owes its existing title.

Some strange changes have elsewhere come over sundry of the old buries and boroughs. Take, for example, the case of Canterbury by the side of Carisbrooke, in the Isle of Wight. In their clipped modern forms there seems to be very little connection indeed between these two fairly dissimilar names. But in their origin they are strictly analogous to one another. The Cantware were the men of Kent, and the Wightware, or Wightgare (I modernise slightly for simplicity's sake), were the men of Wight. Thus Cantwarebury is the Kent-men's-bury, and Wightgaresbury is the Wight-men's-bury; the former form being still partially preserved in the archiepiscopal signature 'Cantuar.' But while the one word has gradually softened down into Canterbury, the other has incontinently lost its head and changed its tail, till it reappears in the incongruous and meaningless modern form of Carisbrooke.

Peterborough and Bury St. Edmunds are two other towns whose names have undergone almost equally curious vicissitudes. The first was originally known as Medeshamstead; but after the foundation of the great abbey, with its accompanying protective works against the intrusive Danes, it came to be called simply Burh, like the Borough in South London, and Bury in Lancashire. Owing to the immense wealth of the monastery, however, the epithet of Golden was often added to the mere name of the fort; and the town was spoken of as the Golden Borough, so that it narrowly escaped being modernised into the alternative forms of Goldenbury or Guildborough. But in the end the name of the patron saint, St. Peter, got merged with the original simple Burh, and the town

became accordingly Peterborough, the English equivalent of Peter the Great's St. Petersburg, on the Neva. As to the Suffolk Bury, that took its name, of course, from St. Edmund of East Anglia, the canonised king killed by the Danish pirates; but its proper title of St. Edmundsbury or, reversed, Bury St. Edmunds, means, I need hardly say, nothing more than St. Edmund's town, the borough of St. Edmund. True, the shrine of the great East Anglian saint was preserved there religiously, so that in that sense St. Edmund was there buried; but save in the remote etymological connection between the noun 'borough' and the verb 'to bury,' there is no relation whatever between these two separate facts. Yet all Bury men religiously believe their town to be so called because St. Edmund the king was buried there. Even so in the West Country local tradition accounts for the names of the villages already mentioned by saying that the Danes in a great battle were maimed at Membury, and their corpses carried to Musbury where they 'must bury' them. Such charmingly childish etymological explanations are amply sufficient for the bucolic intelligence.

To add to the pleasing confusion between the various buries, boroughs, and burghs, it must be further noted that there is another very dissimilar derivative from the same root, namely berg, a mountain. In modern English this word has almost entirely dropped out, save only in the familiar compound, iceberg; but in the older forms of the language it was very common, till slowly superseded by the Norman French equivalent, mountain. In German the two words retain their original close similarity, as burg, a town, and berg, a hill. At first sight, indeed, the modern reader may not perceive any very close resemblance between the two ideas thus somewhat arbitrarily brought together. But to earlier races the connection was indeed a very natural one. For to burrow or dig implies the throwing up at the place dug of a considerable heap, dyke, or barrow; and the barrow is itself a small hill so thrown up over the dead body of a fallen chieftain. Barrows generally cap the hill-tops, and so also do prehistoric forts, buries, or boroughs. Moreover, the mountain or hill is, as it were, a pile or mound, probably thought of as originally thrown up by the definite act of some god or demon. Thus from a variety of causes the distinction between a mountain and a borough came to be a very faint one for early minds. At the present day we have no difficulty at all in discriminating between Berlin and the Matterhorn, or between Paris and the Pic du Midi; but in more



primitive times the hill and the hill-fort, the town and the earthwork, merged mentally into one and the same picture. We can see how hard it was to discriminate the berg from the burg if we think of Heidelberg by the side of Wurtemberg, or of the alternative spellings so long in vogue of Nuremberg and Nuremburg. Perhaps one of the oddest among all these confused forms is the name of the town of Mons, in Belgium, which is only a quaintly Gallicised variant of its native Teutonic title, Bergen.

In England itself there are not very many hills or mountains which bear the distinctive name of borough. But one Yorkshire case at least is quite indubitable, to wit, Ingleborough. Ingle is good old English for a fire, and the word still survives as a poetical archaism in the phrase 'the ingle-nook'; so that Ingleborough is just equivalent to our modern name Beacon Hill, which is given to the pretty little rocky tor beside the lighthouse at Ilfracombe. I mention this latter case with the greater confidence because researches into the visitors' book at the hotels of that Devonshire watering-place, and scientific observation of the solitary couples dotted at intervals among the rocks and slopes close by, lead me to infer that almost everyone in the whole of England has gone to Ilfracombe (not alone) on at least one important turning-point in his personal history. Ingleborough has never returned a member to Parliament; though, to be sure, it has quite as good a right to do so as the deserted hill-top of Old Sarum ever had.

Crowborough Beacon, in Kent, is another instance of the very unparliamentary English borough. The hill so called is the highest point of the Forest Ridge of Surrey and Sussex, and the word borough, which enters into its composition, undoubtedly means here a hill only, not a town, bury, or earthwork. To be sure, there is now a hamlet of Crowborough close at hand, while the termination Beacon has been added to the hill-name; but the word is far older than the modern hamlet, and though Crowborough now means the village only, while the height is always spoken of as Crowborough Beacon, that is only part of the usual perversity of modern English speech, which persists in reduplicating Windermere into Windermere Lake, and refusing to allow even Grasmere and Derwentwater to tell their own tale in their own pretty primitive fashion. I have lived to see Newhaven Harbour and Cranbourne Brook. I fully expect to see before I die, Mount Snowdon, Loch Katrine Lake, and perhaps even Manchester City. Flamborough, now commonly called Flamborough Head, shows us

the Beacon Hill in as early a form as Ingleborough itself. The word of course means Flame-borough, that is to say, the Light-house Berg or promontory.

Hillsborough, in Devonshire, is another very good example of a borough, absolutely bare and grassy since the beginning of all things. If it had ever been a town indeed, and not a mere hill, it would have been Hillsbury, not Hillsborough; for in the west country all the burghs are buries, while, on the contrary, all the bergs are perversely boroughs. That is a little topsy-turvy peculiarity of the Devonian rustic: if a man's name is Pulsford, for instance, he calls him Spulford; but if his name is Sperling, he calls him Persling, just to make things even. Instead of running, the west-countryman urns; instead of asking, he axes; his ruddy robins are urdocks or urdbreasts; Crediton on his lips is Kurton, and furze is fuzz. Now Hillsborough stands close beside the village of Hele, and its meaning is simply Hele's Borough or Hele's Berg,—that is to say, being interpreted, the hill of Hele. Thus the part of the name which says Hill means the village, but the part of it which says Borough means the hill, just out of pure contrariety. So a raisin in Devonshire is called a fig, while a fig is called a dough fig. Clotted cream is 'cream,' *sans phrase*, but cream itself is always 'raw cream.'

In England at large, on the other hand, the buries, even when the name belongs to a hill, are almost always relics of forts or hill-villages. Cissbury Hill, near Worthing, for example, is now absolutely uninhabited, but it is crowned along its summit by a very fine prehistoric fort, within whose precincts an enterprising local archaeologist has unearthed a genuine manufactory of flint implements—the original cores with the flakes struck off them, and the finished hatchets, or tomahawks, in every degree of perfection, broken and unbroken, lying scattered about beneath the modern soil, exactly as the old Stone-Age artisans had left them at the moment when their palisaded stronghold was surprised and captured. Hollingsbury Castle, again, on the downs behind Brighton, is now no longer either a castle or a bury in the latter-day sense; but when the name it still bears was first bestowed upon it, bury designated a hill-fort alone, so that Hollingsbury meant simply the camp of the Hollings. Later on, the original meaning of the termination became obscured, and, a newer word being added to the whole, it came out as Hollingsbury Castle. By-and-by, when even antiquaries have forgotten the old application of

the last element to a hill-stronghold, we may expect that it will be described by the trebly tautological name of Hollingsbury Castle Fort. Bury Hill, near Dorking, is a similar instance, where the old berg has been supplemented by the modern hill, just as we all talk about the river Avon, the Bourne brook, and the Pen head, in all which cases the second half of the name is only a modernisation or translation of the now forgotten and obsolete first.

Sometimes these older borough names are absurdly paralleled by later modern ones. For example, there is Scarborough. Scar, as everybody doubtless knows, is northern English for a cliff; and the word must be familiar in this sense to all visitors to the lake district. Hence Scarborough is, in all probability, the exact equivalent of Clifton—a name which has itself undergone a still more vile builder's-English transformation into Cliftonville. But it is quite possible that the title of Scarborough dates further back than the existence of any village at all at the base of the hill, and that we ought rather to translate the name as Cliff Hill, like the Cleeve Hills near Cheltenham. A very similar overhanging cliff in the half Danish Orkneys bears yet another variety of borough name, as the Brough of Birsá.

Others among the old English boroughs enclose for us still little fossil bits of forgotten history, often deeply interesting to the local inquirer, and full of hints as to the real nature of our early social and domestic arrangements. Take as an excellent instance of this historical type of borough names the word Gainsborough. In very early English days, before our ancestors had even taken to spelling badly, there was a little independent principality in Lincolnshire whose people called themselves the Gainas, and even as late as the time of good King Alfred (whom we reckon as quite a modern personage in these days of prehistoric archæology) the Prince of the Gainas was considered to be a fitting match for the King's own daughter. (Of course nowadays such an alliance would be quite *infra dig.*: we would marry our princess, instead, to a very petty German Grand Duke with about half the same extent of territory.) The prince in question had his capital at Gainsborough—that is to say, the borough or fortified village of the Gainas. In fact it was his *Schloss*. So, again, Shrewsbury, now the county town of a flourishing shire, was originally Scrobbsbury or Scrubsbury, the borough in the scrub, bush, or forest. It may be generally noted, indeed, that almost every hill-fort or very ancient town in England bears a bury or

borough name. Taking three or four western counties alone, one may instance among inhabited towns Malmesbury, Marlborough, Amesbury, Salisbury, Heytesbury, Shaftesbury, Glastonbury, and Abbotsbury; while as to earthworks and hills, too numerous to catalogue, here are a few of the best-known picnicking places—Sidbury, Ogbury Camp, Yarnbury Castle, Battlesbury (overhanging Warminster), Scratchbury, Chiselbury, Badbury Rings, Ell Barrow, Thorncombe Barrow, Weatherbury Castle, Bulbarrow, Rawlsbury, Trent Barrow, Winkelbury, Cadbury, Elbury, and Twin Barrows. Sometimes the orthography shows a tendency to grow phonetic, which must take the bread out of the mouth of the spelling reformers—as in Preston Berry Castle, the heather-grown hill-fort that overlooks the deep gorge of the Teign, near Moreton Hampstead, and Masberry Castle, the old British fortress in the ever-unconquered Mendips, beside the Roman Fosseway that leads across the uplands from Bath to Shepton Mallet and Ilchester. But these little orthographical vagaries do not for a moment mislead the practised archæologist; he knows at sight that Oldborough, near Chippenham, is the same name as Oldbury, near Wilton, and that Berry Pomeroy, not far from Torquay, is identical in meaning with Bury Hill among the Surrey outliers of the bare North Downs.

Oldbury, of course, implies Newbury, of which Berkshire supplies us with a well-known example. Many of the unparliamentary boroughs, indeed, are thus grouped together by natural contrast. If there is a Highbury in the Hampstead district, there is a Netherbury to match it near Beaminster, in Dorset. Kingsbury Episcopi answers indifferently well to Queenborough, the familiar port for Flushing, while unparliamentary pairs like Hanbury and Banbury, Cherbury and Burbury, Scarborough and Warborough, may be found scattered about all over the ordnance map of England in wild profusion. I am not quite sure whether one can completely box the compass with Norbury and Sudbury, Eastbury and Westbury. The two first names and the last, indeed, are familiar to us all, but I don't myself remember ever to have met with a case of Eastbury. However, I say this under correction, and no doubt I shall get it. I am far too wise by this time to assert a negative. In a moment of weakness I once incautiously stated in this magazine that though Chadwick as a personal name implied the former existence of a village so-called, there was no hamlet of Chadwick at present to be found by diligent search in these kingdoms. By the first post after I had committed myself

to that deadly error an obliging and well-informed correspondent sent me a list of thirteen distinct and separate villages of Chadwick, collected in various counties of England and Wales. I may add that I do not personally yearn and burn for the discovery of an Eastbury. Persons having large numbers of Eastburies on hand may keep them entirely in their own bosoms for their own private gratification.

Burghs are far less common in England than in Scotland, but they flourish to some extent on the east coast, where their pronunciation would not by any means come up to Sir George Campbell's rigorous requirements. Aldeburgh, near the mouth of the little river Alde, is pronounced Alde-boro', while Happisburgh, a growing watering-place and future rival of its neighbour Cromer, is softened down on local lips to Haze-boro'. And since I have made mention of these East Anglian burghs, it would be an unpardonable slip not to add in this connection that Aldeburgh is the original of Crabbe's 'Borough,' a poem once much read and unduly admired, and now as much and unduly neglected. Burgh Castle, near Great Yarmouth—a Roman ruin of massive grandeur—is similarly pronounced borough, and affords also another capital example of reduplicated place-names.

It might be supposed that the fairly extensive list I have here given pretty well exhausted the whole catalogue of buries and boroughs in the United Kingdom, as I have no doubt it has long since done the reader's patience. But that is very far indeed from being the case. Among large and well-known places, in fact, I have not mentioned at all Knaresborough and Wellingborough, Aylesbury and Tewkesbury, Finsbury and Shoebury, Maryborough and Helensburgh. The entire list of buries and boroughs for England alone would fill out a great many closely printed pages. I will only give one more example, and that (for the sake of the bull) shall be a French one. Cherbourg is interesting as a burgh situated in what is now a purely French district, but its name was given to it by the Saxon settlers of the fifth century, the very same people whose piratical longships founded at the same time the Saxon colonies on the opposite coast of Hants and Dorset, and whose half-mythical leader left his own mark on his own bury at Hengistbury Head. All the other towns or villages from Caen to Cherbourg also bear purely English names, a little twisted aside by French spelling, but still unmistakably betraying in etymology and meaning the impress of their ancient Saxon origin.

## THE BIRTH OF MOUNTAINS.

PRETENDERS to longevity usually turn out upon strict inquiry to be hoary impostors: they are not half so aged in reality as they make themselves out to be. Mountains themselves, for all their show of antiquity, form no exception to this almost universal rule of evidence. The eternal hills have no proper claim to the honours of eternity; some of them, indeed, which now hold their heads very high in the world, and go in for coronets of snow or diadems of ice, and so forth (for particulars of which see the poets), are really of very modern origin, and cannot show half so good a pedigree after all as many an unobtrusive little granite knoll, upon which they now look down with sublime scorn from the proud height of their *parvenu* complacency. 'As old as the hills' seems to most of us the extreme limit of possible age; and yet, since all created things must needs at some time have had a beginning, it is immediately obvious to the meanest capacity—and much more, then, to the courteous reader—that even the eternal hills themselves must in their own time have slowly passed through the various stages of infancy, childhood, adolescence, and full maturity. Old as they are, they have yet once been young and foolish; grey as they are, they have yet once been green and grassy; solemn as they are, they have yet once indulged in a boisterous, noisy, and even skittish youth, before settling down by slow degrees into the sober respectability of middle age. Every dog has his day, and the eternal hills have had theirs. As little hills they have skipped audaciously; they have grown and grown by slow increment; they have passed gradually from a state of youthful activity and mobility and life to a state of discreet and immovable senile solidity. Yet many of them are young at heart even now, and some of them, that look demure enough on ordinary occasions, are still distracted by fiery passions within, which rend and tear them from time to time with fierce convulsions in their inmost bowels.

Yes, the eternal hills have had a beginning, and the beginning was often far more modern than most people usually imagine. There are small hillocks in these islands of Britain that were already great mountains while the Alps and the Himalayas still lay slumbering sweetly beneath half-a-mile of superincumbent



ocean. Indeed, as a general rule, it may be said that the biggest mountains are very new, and that the oldest mountains are very small. Size is here no criterion of age; for when once a mountain has ceased growing and attained maturity, it begins to grow down again, by mere wear and tear, until at last wind and weather, rain and river, have slowly beaten it back to the level of the plain from which it sprang. Let us look briefly at the whole life-history of an adult mountain, thus regarded as an organic unity, from the time when it first begins to raise its young head timidly from the mother ocean, to the time when, decrepit and worn-out, a broken remnant, it loses individuality altogether in the broad expanse of the surrounding lowlands.

Everybody in these days knows, of course, that every mountain worth speaking of (bar the inevitable exceptions that 'prove the rule') has once been a portion of the sea-bottom. Unless it be a volcano or self-made mountain, the rocks and stones of which it is composed have been laid down, some time or other, on the bed of some forgotten and primæval ocean. So much all the world has long known, ever since geology as a science first fought its way against severe odds into general recognition; but, strange to say, it has only been in very recent years indeed that any real progress has been made in the comprehension of the life-history of mountains. They had once lain *perdu* at the bottom of the sea; they now soar away among the moist, cold, and uncomfortable clouds:—that was all that science could tell us about them; but how they got there or what pushed them up was for many years an insoluble mystery.

Your volcano, indeed, may at once be put out of court in this respect, because everyone can see at a glance the *modus operandi* of the common volcano. Like a clumsy conjuror it does the trick openly before your eyes; it lets you see it in the very act of tossing out great showers of stones and ashes, which fall symmetrically on every side, and produce the well-known regular cone that one sees exemplified in the sugar-loaf outline of Etna or Fusi Yama, or in the topmost summit of Vesuvius itself. Or again, in some other cases, your volcano works by squirting up a mass of viscid lava through a fissure in the earth, and allowing it to cool slowly into dome-shaped mountains like the Puys of Auvergne, or the odd-looking Mamelors of the African islands. Either of these cheap and easy ways of forming a mountain is simple enough to understand; but then, they only explain themselves; they cast



no light at all upon that other and vastly larger group of mountains which have been slowly raised by secular action from the bottom of deep and ancient oceans. We don't, most of us, come across many active or even extinct volcanoes in the course of a lifetime. I could count, myself, on the fingers of one hand, the total number of confirmed smokers of this description that I have ever met with in all my wanderings. Teneriffe and Pico, Hecla and Cotopaxi do not fall in everybody's way casually during the average spell of a summer holiday. The mountain with whose personal peculiarities we are most of us most familiar—the average Swiss, or Scotch, or Welsh specimen—consists mainly or entirely of sedimentary material from the sea-bottom, and is only very remotely connected in any way with volcanic action. How did such an eternal hill as this begin to be, and what power raised it from abysmal degradation to its present proud and lofty position in the world of mountains?

I don't suppose that, to answer this question, we could possibly do better than take the life-history of the Alps themselves, as expounded for us in very choice geological English by Professor Judd and other observers, whose remarks I shall humbly endeavour to the best of my ability to translate here into the vernacular dialect.

Once upon a time there were no Alps—indeed, during the whole vast primary period of geology (embracing in all probability four-fifths of the duration of life upon this planet) there is every reason to believe that central Europe lay consistently and persistently beneath the depths of the sea. The German Ocean was then really conterminous with the whole of Germany, and the Sea of Rome embraced the greater part of Catholic Europe. It was only at the opening of the secondary period—the age of the great marine lizards—that the first faint embryo of the baby Alps began to be formed. Now, the origin of a mountain chain is not really due, as most people used once to imagine, to a direct vertical up-thrust from below, as when you push a handkerchief up with a pencil—the old lecture illustration; its causes and conditions are far more complex and varied than that; it is, in fact, strange as it may sound to say so, a result of subsidence rather than of upheaval—a symptom rather of general shrinkage than of local eruption. For nothing can shrink without wrinkling and corrugating its surface; a result which one commonly sees alike in a withered apple, an old man's hand, and a dry pond cracked and fissured all

over by the hot sun. The Alps are thus ultimately due to the shrinkage of the earth upon its own centre; they are dislocations of the crust at a weak point, where it finally collapsed, and threw up in collapsing a huge heap of tangled and contorted rubbish.

The beginning of the Alps, in fact, was due to the development in Permian times—everybody is, of course, quite familiarly acquainted with the Permian period—of a line of weakness in the earth's crust, right along the very centre of what is now Switzerland, but what was then probably nowhere in particular. The line of weakness thus produced showed itself overtly by the opening of a number of fissures in the solid crust, like cracks in a ceiling—not, indeed, visible to the naked eye of any inquiring saurian who may have chanced to investigate the phenomena in person, but manifesting their existence none the less by the outburst along their line of volcanic vents, hot springs, geysers, and all the other outer and visible signs of direct communication with the heated regions beneath the earth. From these fissures masses of lava, tuff, and other volcanic materials rapidly poured forth, some of which still form the core of the Alpine system, though most of them are buried at the present day under other layers of later deposition.

'Aha,' you say, 'so after all, in spite of promises to the contrary, the Alps themselves turn out to be at bottom of volcanic origin.' Not a bit of it: let us suspend judgment for the present. The actual Alps, as we know them to-day, are of far later and more modern date. The very next thing the volcanoes did after bursting out frantically into action was to disappear bodily beneath the bed of the ocean. This is a very common and natural proceeding on the part of extensive volcanic ranges. First they pop up and then they pop down again. You see, the line of weakness had resulted in the pouring out of immense quantities of molten lava, in some places twelve or fifteen thousand feet thick; and that necessarily left a hole below, besides piling up a lot of very heavy matter on top of the hole thus occasioned. The natural consequence was a general collapse; the age of great volcanic outbursts was followed by an age of gradual subsidence. Of course the young Alps, already a very sturdy infant range, didn't sink all in a moment beneath the engulfing waters of the Triassic sea. All through the Triassic period—the age of the English salt beds—smaller volcanoes went on pushing themselves up more or less feebly from time to time, and doing their level best to frighten the big

lizards with their molten ejections; but still the support was steadily removed from below this portion of the earth's crust, and the weight above made it sink slowly, slowly, slowly beneath the waters of the sea, just as southern Sweden is now sinking, an inch at a time, under the brackish waves of the encroaching Baltic. Streets in Swedish towns, originally built, no doubt (like most other streets), above high-water mark, now lie below the tide (which must be very uncomfortable for their owners), with other earlier and still lower streets beneath and beyond them. The whole peninsula, in fact, is gradually disappearing beneath the waters of the Baltic, as regardless as Mr. George himself of the vested interests of the landed proprietors. Just so, in all probability, by very slow degrees the Triassic volcanoes sank and sank, till at last the blue Triassic sea flowed uninterruptedly over the whole of Switzerland. During all the Triassic time, indeed, the igneous forces were getting gradually exhausted, and by the close of that long period they had fallen into a pitiable state of complete extinction.

Year after year and age after age the buried core of the future Alps went on sinking further and yet further under the deepening waters of an ever profounder and profounder ocean. One kind of sediment after another was deposited on top of it, and these sediments, of very diverse hardnesses and thicknesses, form the mass of the rocks of which the existing Alps are now composed. The line of weakness occupied most probably the centre of the great Mediterranean thus produced; for the sediments lie far thicker in the Alps themselves than round the shallow edges of the sea, in whose midst they were laid down. In fact, many of the strata which, away from the Alpine axis, measure only hundreds of feet thick, increase along that central line till their thickness may rather be measured by thousands. The united depth of all the sediments accumulated along the sinking line during the whole secondary age amounts to about ten miles. In other words, the core of the Alps must have sunk from fifteen thousand feet above the sea to at least ten miles below it. Not, of course, that the sea itself was ever ten miles deep, for the sediment went on accumulating all the time, and sinking and sinking as fast as it accumulated; but the volcanic core, which was once perhaps nearly a mile above sea level, must at last have sunk far beneath it, with not less than ten miles of accumulated rubbish lying on its top.

With the setting in of the tertiary period—the age of the

great extinct mammals—opens the third chapter in the history of the origin and rise of the Alps. The trough-like hollow, filled with thick layers of sediment, which then covered the line of weakness in the earth's surface, began to be pressed, and crushed, and pushed sideways by the lateral strain of the subsiding crust. Naturally, as the crust falls in slowly by its own weight upon the cooling centre, it thrusts from either side against the weakest points, and in so doing it twists, contorts, and crumples the layers of rock about the lines of weakness in the most extraordinary and almost incredible fashion. To put it quite simply, if a solid shell big enough to cover a globe of so many miles in diameter is compelled to fall in, so as to accommodate itself to the shrunken circumference of a globe so many miles less in diameter, it must necessarily form folds every here and there, in which the various layers of which it is composed will be doubled over one another in picturesque confusion. Such a fold or doubling of the layers are the Alps and the Jura. Our world is growing old and growing cold; and as it waxes older and colder it shrinks and shrinks, and shakes and quivers, so that its coat is perpetually getting a little too big for it, and has to be taken in at the seams from time to time. The taking in is done by the simple and primitive method of making a bulging tuck. The Alps are situated just above a seam, and are themselves one of the huge bulging tucks in question.

The inner hot nucleus of the globe (which is not liquid, as the old-fashioned geologists did vainly hold, but solid and rigid) contracts faster than the cooler outside. The cold upper shell therefore falls in upon it more or less continually, and thus, occupying less horizontal space, must necessarily cause great lateral pressure. Imagine for a moment a solid weight of millions upon millions and millions of tons all falling in towards a common centre, and all squeezing sideways the parts about the crack at which the crust of the earth is weakest. The present structure of the Alps shows us admirably how enormous is the force thus exerted. The solid rocks which compose their surface are twisted and contorted in the most extraordinary way, great groups of strata, once horizontal, being folded over and over each other, exactly as one might fold a carpet in several layers. Professor Heim, of Zurich, has shown by careful measurements that the strata of rock which now go to make up the northern half of the central Alps alone once occupied just twice as much horizontal space as they do at present. The crushing and folding due to the lateral pres-

sure has been powerful enough to wrinkle up the different layers, and throw them back upon one another like a blanket doubled over and over, in huge folds, that often reach from base to summit of lofty mountains, and stretch over whole square miles of the surface of Switzerland. According to Professor Heim, the folding of the crust has been so enormous, that points originally far apart have been brought seventy-four miles nearer one another than they were at the beginning of the movement of pressure. In fact, Switzerland must have been originally quite a large country, with some natural pretensions to be regarded in the light of a first-rate European power; but its outside has been folded over and over so often that there is now very little of it left upon the surface. What it once possessed in area it has nowadays to take out in elevation only.

Of course, if you make such colossal folds as these in solid rocks and other comparatively incompressible materials, you must necessarily raise them a great deal above the original level. You must put the extra material somewhere, and to heap it up in huge folds is the simplest and easiest thing to do with it. At the same time the compression is so immense that it succeeds in hardening and altering the composition of the rocks themselves, so much so that even if you pick out a single small piece of the stone you will find it puckered and crumpled in the most intricate manner by the enormous side-thrust of half a continent. Masses of soft clay, like that sticky stuff thrown up in laying down London gas-pipes, have been pressed close into the condition of hard roofing slates by the lateral pressure. Soft muds have been hardened and thickened into crystalline rock, and sands converted into solid masses as dense as granite. The whole great fold of crumpled, hardened, and distorted strata thus piled confusedly one on top of the other is the modern Alps, and the minor folds that lead up to it compose the lesser parallel ranges, like the Jura, that run quietly along their foot. In some parts of the Jura these folds follow one another in regular undulations, exactly like so many thicknesses of cloth, puckered up into ridges and hollows by side pressure.

That, put briefly, is just how the Alps came to be raised visibly above the earth's surface. They are there, not because they were pushed up from below, but because they were crushed up sideways by the collapsing earth-crust: they represent not vertical thrust, but lateral pressure. How terrific, says everybody, must have

been the grand convulsion of nature to which so enormous a mass of mountains was originally due ! Not a bit of it. The convulsion of nature was probably not in the least terrific. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that it continues its slow, quiet, and unobtrusive action uninterruptedly even down to the present day. The Alps are still being built up yet higher by the selfsame side-thrust, and the occasional earthquakes to which they have always been subject are good evidence that the work of mountain-making still proceeds slowly within them. What a comfort to reflect, when one's hotel is rudely shaken on the lake of Geneva or at Interlaken, that the shake has probably added half an inch to the stature of Mont Blanc or the Bernese Oberland ! For aught we mortals know to the contrary, the Matterhorn itself may still be regarded in cosmical circles as a rising mountain. To be sure, during the period of greatest movement there may have been from time to time occasional paroxysms far more violent than any that have occurred in Switzerland during historical ages—terrific pangs of Mother Earth in labour—but on the other hand there may not. Slow and steady pressure long exerted would amply suffice to account for all the twists and folds, the distortions and dislocations, of the Swiss Alps as we see them at present.

But the existing contour of the various chains is not, of course, the contour due to the original upheaval or folding process. Nature is a very perverse goddess : the first thing she does is to heave up a mountain range, and the very next thing she tries to do is to knock it down again as fast as possible. No sooner is a ridge raised to an appreciable height above the surrounding plain than wind and rainfall, torrent and glacier, do their best to wear it down once more to indistinguishable uniformity with the neighbouring country. Water, as we all know, is the great leveller, the most democratic among the forces of nature ; it brings down the mountain from its lofty height, and fills up lake and valley and estuary and ocean with the powdered detritus it has slowly worn from the disintegrated summit. As rain, it washes away soil and crumbles rocks ; as river or torrent, it cuts itself deep ravines and precipitous gorges ; as ice, it grinds down hills, and wears profound glens among the solid strata ; as snow, it equalises all the rugged surfaces with its deceptive covering of virgin white. So, even while the upward movement of the Alps was still in active and constant progress, the reverse process of disintegration must have been steadily going on, side by side with it, in a thousand



unobtrusive minor ways. The whole existing contour of dome and *aiguille*, peak and valley, gorge and scarp, chasm and corrie, is due to the continuous close inter-action of these two forces—the upheaving and the disintegrating, the building and the unbuilding.

If the force which raised the mountains had acted all at once, and no disintegrating action had afterwards taken place, the Alps would have consisted on the whole of one great folded mass, led up to by a number of lesser undulations, and rising at the centre into a huge boss or elongated hog's back, which might, perhaps, be more or less broken here and there by an occasional dislocation. They would have formed, not a varied range of mountains, but a continuous ridge. From the picturesque point of view, such an Alp as this would be practically worthless; it would be nothing more than one gigantic down, without any variety, romance, or mystery—a mere dome of swelling rock, covered on the summit by a curved sheet of monotonous, dull, and uninteresting snow. Fortunately for the British tourist and the canny Swiss hotel-keeper, nature managed the thing in a different way. Frost and rain scarped out the range, as fast as it rose, into jagged peaks like those of Chamouni, or precipitous cliffs like those of Grindelwald. Rivers carved out for themselves deep glens like that of the Valais, and glaciers wore themselves profound beds like that of the Mer de Glace, or round lake basins like those of the Grimsel. The softer parts were cut away by this ceaseless action of wind and rain and frost and ice-sheet; the harder and more crystalline portions alone were left behind, scarred and weathered into fantastic shapes as jagged peak or craggy summit. The final outcome of the whole process is the modern Alps, as we actually see them—rising here into snow-clad bosses, jutting out there in naked needles; traversed at one spot by deeply cut torrents, sculptured at another into beautiful valleys. 'They remain,' says Professor Geikie, 'a marvellous monument of stupendous earth-throes, followed by a prolonged gigantic denudation.' The whole mass is not, in short, nearly so high as it would have been had erosion never kept pace with elevation; but it is a thousand times more picturesque, more varied, more wonderful, and more dangerous. I add the last epithet advisedly, out of compliment to the genius of the Alpine Club.

Professor Judd has well shown how great is the amount of wear and tear to which mountains are thus subjected, and how enormous is the loss of material they undergo, in the case of the



extinct volcano of Mull, which rose during the not very remote Miocene period to a height of some ten or twelve thousand feet above the sea level. It had a diameter of thirty miles at its base, and its great cone rose gigantic like that of Etna, or of Fusi on a Japanese fan, far into the sky, unseen by any eye save that of the half-human, ape-like creatures whose rude fire-marked flint flakes the Abbé Bourgeois has disintombed from contemporary strata in the north of France. Since the Miocene days, rain and frost and wind and weather have wreaked their will unchecked upon the poor old broken-down, ruined volcano, till now, in its feeble old age, its youthful fires long since extinguished, it stands a mere worn stump, consisting of a few scattered hills, none of which exceeds three thousand feet in height above sea level. All the rest—cone and ashes, lava and débris—has been washed away by the pitiless rain, or split and destroyed by the powerful ice-wedges, leaving only the central core of harder matter, with a few outlying weather-beaten patches of solid basalt and volcanic conglomerate.

All the other great mountain chains of the earth have been produced in the same way as the Alps, and have passed through exactly parallel phases. But many isolated mountains and lesser hills have a somewhat different and simpler origin, being really nothing more than harder masses of a once continuous upland plain, which have resisted the disintegrating action of rain and wind far longer than the softer and more friable surrounding portions. It should be remembered, too, that all the great existing chains are of very recent origin indeed. There do exist in Europe many very ancient mountain ranges; but these consist for the most part of worn-down and degraded relics of far higher original masses—the central core of now disintegrated Alps and Himalayas. The older a range, the lower it must be; the higher a range, the newer its origin.

I cannot better close this brief *résumé* of the life-history of an eternal hill than by quoting the lucid summing-up of Professor Judd on the origin and progress of a young mountain. 'It will be seen,' he says, 'that mountain chains may be regarded as cicatrised wounds in the earth's solid crust. A line of weakness first betrays itself at a certain part of the earth's surface by fissures, from which volcanic outbursts take place; and thus the position of the future mountain chain is determined. Next, subsidence during many millions of years permits of the accumulation of the

raw materials out of which the mountain range is to be formed; subsequent earth-movements cause these raw materials to be elaborated into the hardest and most crystalline rock-masses, and place them in elevated and favourable positions; and, lastly, denudation sculptures from these hardened rock-masses all the varied mountain forms. Thus the work of mountain-making is not, as was formerly supposed by geologists, the result of a simple upheaving force, but is the outcome of a long and complicated series of operations.' That is the last word of modern science on the birth, the babyhood, and the maturity of mountains.

## RAINBOW GOLD.<sup>1</sup>

A NOVEL.

BY DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

### BOOK IV.—*continued.*

HOW AARON WHITTAKER BEGAN TO LONG FOR THE RAINBOW GOLD, AND JOB ROUND THREW IT AWAY.

#### CHAPTER IV.

WHILST all these things were enacting Mr. Thomas Bowling's greed and rage became daily more and more aggravated. The fancy of the buried treasure haunted him, and Job Round being for the hour the hero of the parish, and his name in everybody's mouth, Mr. Bowling heard so much of him that at times he was well nigh beside himself. He thought of the treasure, and he dreamt of the treasure, and he longed and pined to be at it with the actual passion of concupiscence. In his own clumsy fancy many a hundred times he begged his way across the continent, or worked his way by sea to Constantinople and Varna, and deserting the ship struck into the country towards the Balkans, and there by happy chance lighted on the place where the gold lay buried. Awake and asleep he handled it, poured it in a glittering musical stream from both hands; saw it, and felt it, and heard it, and went mad over it.

If that split Besh-Lira on which was engraved the clue to the buried wealth had been in the possession of any other creature than Job Round, and Mr. Bowling had known of it, he would have done murder to become possessed of it, and would have thought it cheaply gained. But in Job's keeping it was safe from Mr. Bowling. A man who took poison enough to kill an elephant and survived it had something supernatural in him to Mr. Bowling's mind, and he was too ignorant to know that a fortieth part of the dose he had administered would have proved fatal. He had had half the treasure for his own, and had thought it worth a comrade's life to have the other half. To have it all he would have poisoned a village full of people, if the thing could have been done with safety.

<sup>1</sup> This novel has been dramatised by the author.

Among Western people it takes a great deal of mental anguish to make a man tear his hair, but this became a common private relaxation with Mr. Bowling. There were times when he would punch his own hat savagely off his head, and taking his grizzled head with both big knuckly hands, would tear at it and tug at it as if it were his bitterest enemy's, snarling and gnashing his teeth meanwhile in an ecstasy of impotence. He would reach to this tragic height of self-abandonment sometimes twice or thrice a week, and in the intervals between his rages would subside into a humour so sullen and scowling that his mere aspect was unpleasant to women and children, and his presence an embarrassment to his co-mates in labour.

In a degree infinitely milder, but with a remarkably persistent habit of recurrence, the same fancy made itself present to the mind of Aaron Whittaker. When the idea became too exigent to be pleasant, and grew tantalising, as it sometimes did, he would try to dismiss it, and would tell himself what most people who had heard the story devoutly believed—namely, that Mr. Bowling was a liar. But Aaron's belief in the tale was too well rooted to be easily torn up, and it was nourished and strengthened by another belief, which he himself admitted to be singular and yet could not succeed in escaping. This second belief was that Job Round knew of the truth of Mr. Bowling's narrative, and was, in some way, Mr. Bowling's master, and a hatred and a terror to him.

If there was one thing on which Aaron prided himself more than another it was the power to put two and two together. He was by nature and habit suspicious, and he had a rather vulgar strain of romantic fancy. It was interesting, and made him feel rather like a personage in a book, to fancy that there was a mystery at his own doors, and that his prospective father-in-law was in it.

Casting about for any sort of ground on which to rest this fancy-bred hypothesis of his, he recalled to mind the fact that in his first interview with Mr. Bowling that gentleman's conversion from insolence to civility had followed on the mention of Job Round's name. Putting this together with the man's evident fear of Job, in that curious garden scene at which Aaron had himself assisted; remembering the talk in a strange tongue which had prefaced Mr. Bowling's story; the air of reluctance under compulsion with which the tale was told; the deadly look the

narrator had once cast at Job; and, above all, Mr. Bowling's apparent certainty that Aaron had come to him as an authorised messenger; the young man became persuaded that he was in the midst of a strange story which might somehow end to his own profit. And daily rubbing the itch of his curiosity until it grew inflamed, and growing day by day more certain of his own theories, he became possessed of some weak likeness of that concupiscence of greed which animated Mr. Bowling. It was much weaker than Mr. Bowling's passion—partly because it was in his nature that it should be weaker, but partly also because he had not, in spite of his faith in his theories, that excellent person's certainty of knowledge.

Now Aaron had been for some time engaged in a commercial speculation which might result in great profit to himself or in great loss to other people. His mother, whose sole heir he was likely to be, had the freehold of a small farm which had long been looked upon as being almost valueless. The soil was poor and thin, and the crops it yielded were of a corresponding quality. It occurred to Aaron that it was not improbable that great riches lay below this poverty-stricken surface, and possessing himself of a geological map of the district, he had studied it to such effect as to become persuaded that beneath his mother's freehold lay a richer buried treasure than that of which Mr. Bowling was forbidden to speak. Fired with this idea, he laid it before the two capitalists of his acquaintance, Farmer Bache and old Ezekiel Round, and they, after consultation with a mine-surveyor of no particular reputation, decided to embark with Aaron in the scheme—Mrs. Whittaker having already given her consent to it.

Aaron became the practical man, and superintended the sinking of the shaft with great ardour. The new scheme was going to fill with money the pockets of all people concerned in it, and the young man took a great pride in being seen in his working clothes and with the soil of strange earths upon his boots. The impression that Mr. Whittaker was going to settle down became general, and it was known everywhere that he visited Konak Cottage with Job Round's approval as a suitor for his daughter's hand.

The 'Ring o' Bells' lay in Mr. Whittaker's way from the new sinking to his mother's house, and the young man, being in spite of some magnificences of self-opinion a genial person, and willing to unbend for a gossip, would sometimes call there, and let the assembled rustics know how the mine was getting on.

'Coal's all round us, Mr. Parker,' the young man would say with a fine air of certainty. 'The real old-fashioned thirty-foot Staffordshire. None of your Welsh three-foot seams, but the old-fashioned ten-yard stuff, worth a thousand pounds an acre, and all expenses paid.'

He would invent with great fluency stories of applications from local magnates who desired to join the firm, and were heart-struck at exclusion from so rich a scheme.

The days were already drawing in, and the out-door parliaments of the 'Ring o' Bells' were over for the season, but the sittings were held within doors now, the session of drinkers and drawlers lasting all the year round. Mr. Bowling still took an occasional seat among the frequenters of the place, but he was no longer regarded as enjoyable company. His surly presence cast a gloom upon the house, and he could be moved neither by disbelief nor credence, by chaff nor cajolery, to revert to those stories of his wandering life which at one time had been found so entertaining. He was not only a less agreeable but a less frequent guest than of old, and it became evident by-and-by that Mr. Bowling's object in visiting the 'Ring o' Bells' was to get drunk. To that end he saved his money, and to that end, when he had saved enough, he would sit and drink sulkily until his purpose was accomplished, growing surlier and savager with each succeeding tankard, and finally rolling away in an access of ill-temper.

Aaron came in pretty late one evening, when the company had already gathered and the candles were alight on the heavy tables. Hearing the landlord's voice raised in tones of expostulation he entered the common room, and saw between two lights the projected head of Mr. Bowling, who was looking at the opposite wall with an expression of drunken scorn, and feigning to take no notice of the landlord's upbraidings.

'It's come to this, mister,' said the landlord: 'your room's growed to be more highly thought on than your company, and the less you puttin' your head within these doors, the better opinion we shall have on you. A house of entertainment *is* a house of entertainment—for man an' beast. But the place for the beast is i' the stables, or the cow-shed, or the pigsty, as the case may be, and not among a number of decent men, as knowin' nothin' better than when they'n had as much as is good for 'em. Thee can't sit theer just as long as thee lik'st, but thee'st get no moor to drink i' this house.'

To this Mr. Bowling returned no other answer than was conveyed by tapping the quart pot in front of him, which was full to the brim.

'Very well,' returned the landlord, 'mek the most on it. Drunk or dry, Sunday or wick-day, that's the last sarvin' thee'st get at the "Ring o' Bells."'

'Why, Parker,' said Aaron, who was as yet unseen by the landlord, 'what's the matter?'

'The matter's this, Mr. Whittaker,' said Parker: 'the man niver quits the house sober, and that's a scandal to a decent public. He's onceivil when he speaks, which is but seldom, and he uses language, which is a thing as I cannot abide. I'll have no man usin' language i' my house.'

'For the first week or two,' said the withered ancient, who had a seat in the chimney-corner, 'the man was righteously amusin'; but o' late days theer's a change upon him.'

Aaron looked at Mr. Bowling, and Mr. Bowling looked at him.

'I've got my orders,' said Mr. Bowling, 'and I'm a-carrying of 'em out. Hold your jaw's the word. Very well then. I'm a-holdin' of it.' He took a pull at his beer, and nodded twice or thrice after it. 'Ask 'em,' he added, with a drunken wave of the hand which overthrew one of the candles; 'ask 'em if I've spoke a word.'

'Theer's a speeches of delusion on his sperrit, Mr. Whittaker,' said the withered ancient. 'He's been seen to knock that theer head of hisn agen a pollard, wheer the brook runs through the Thirteen Acre, and that self-treatment's a sign o' possession, an' has been so sence the time of the mon as lived among the tombs in the Noo Testymant. Bedlam's the place for him, beyand a doubt.'

'Come, come,' said Aaron patronisingly, addressing Mr. Bowling; 'you shouldn't get drunk, you know. You'll do yourself no good that way.' Mr. Bowling nodded gloomily at him, not in acquiescence, but as if to signify some sort of understanding private to himself. 'What do you do it for?' pursued Aaron. 'Where's the good of it?'

Murmurs from the assembly, 'That's the p'int, Mr. Whittaker.' 'Wheer is the good on it?'

'Ah!' said Mr. Bowling, looking with drunken contempt about him. 'Wheer's the good of it? Ask these swine, and what do they know? They ain't got nothing on their minds. They ain't got the minds to have nothing on.'



'Look here!' cried the landlord wrathfully, 'keep a civiler tongue than that, or out thee goest, neck and crop.'

Again Mr. Bowling nodded in private understanding with himself, and having taken a great pull at his delf tankard, sat with his head thrust forward, and stared savagely at the opposite wall. Aaron called for a glass of beer, and, standing with his back to the fire-place, looked every now and again, as if in spite of himself, at Mr. Bowling, and once or twice Mr. Bowling appeared to awaken to the fact that Aaron was looking at him, and would divert his sulky gaze from the wall to stare him out of countenance.

At length the seaman finished his beer, and, rising with a swaying motion, looked round upon the assembled company as if intending to speak, but contenting himself with a scowl and a muttered curse or two, bored his way out of the room, head forward. A minute later, Aaron set down his glass, bade the landlord and his guests a general good-night, and followed in Mr. Bowling's footsteps.

When he had first seen the sailor he had pronounced him an ugly customer, and the coffee-coloured visage, the great scar, and the scowling eyes still made their owner look formidable to him. At another time he might have hesitated to follow the man, knowing his mood as he did now, but all the oddities of Mr. Bowling's late behaviour, which excited nothing but doubts of his sanity in the minds of his rustic compeers, were confirmation strong to Aaron with respect to the real existence of that buried treasure, and for the life of him he could not resist the temptation to know more, if by any chance more were to be known. He did not altogether like to tackle the man in his present condition, but being cheered and encouraged by the reflection that in case of extremity he could probably run a great deal faster than Mr. Bowling, and animated by the hope that in his drunken humour the man might be trapped into saying things he would keep to himself when sober, Aaron made bold to follow.

The night was dusky and chill, with a wandering white mist abroad, but by-and-by Aaron sighted the dim figure of the sailor, who was walking at a great rate, though he tacked so often and at such acute angles that he made but small progress.

'Here, I say,' cried Aaron genially, coming on a level with him; 'you'll walk into the ditch if you don't mind.'

Mr. Bowling turned to look at the speaker and fell into his

arms, but his language made it clear that the embrace was not dictated by affection.

‘Hold up, you lubber,’ cried Mr. Bowling. ‘What do you yaw like that for?’

‘All right,’ said Aaron, propping him upright and holding him by the arms. ‘Now you’re all right, eh? Come along.’

‘Come along?’ returned Mr. Bowling. ‘Come along wheer?’

‘Why, come along home, to be sure, to the farm.’

‘Very well then,’ said Mr. Bowling, as if he had triumphantly maintained a point in argument, and he suffered Aaron to hold him by the sleeve of his smockfrock, and in that way to guide his devious footsteps.

‘What makes you afraid of Mr. Round?’ said Aaron suddenly.

‘Who says as I’m afraid of Mr. Round?’ demanded the other, stopping short in his walk and swaying against his questioner.

‘I do,’ replied Aaron.

‘Very well then,’ replied Mr. Bowling, ‘so I am.’ Aaron’s heart gave an odd little bump at his side.

‘What makes you afraid of him?’ he asked.

‘Look here!’ returned the sailor. ‘I’m intoxicated, I am. Ain’t I? Look here! Am I the wuss for drink, or am I not?’ He took Aaron by the shoulders, and held tight to steady himself. ‘You can tell as I’m the wuss for liquor, can’t you?’

‘Yes, I can,’ returned Aaron.

‘Very well then. You go back and tell Joby Round, Esquire, you seen me. Like this. Regular right-down rollin’ intoxicated, like this.’

‘Yes,’ said Aaron, with his heart playing on his ribs in quite a series of little bumps. ‘Yes.’

‘You tell him,’ said Mr. Bowling, holding on more tightly, ‘as I never said a word.’

‘I’ll tell him,’ replied Aaron. ‘You never said a word about the buried treasure? Eh?’

‘Not a word,’ said Mr. Bowling, with a lurch.

‘And that you never have said a word since he told you not to?’

‘Not a synnable,’ answered Mr. Bowling.

It is one thing to have a theory which looks plausible and to persuade yourself that you believe it, and it is another thing to have the theory confirmed. Aaron had rather a dreamlike feeling for a second or two. Theory turned into fact. Cloud turned into rock.

'All right,' said Aaron, 'I'll tell him. Is there anything else you'd like me to say?'

'He ain't got a call for to try and trap me. I shan't say nothing. He needn't be afeard of me breathing of a word. I don't deny as it weighs upon me. That's nayther here nor theer. But I've got my orders, and I'm a-sticking to 'em. Drunk or sober, I'm a-sticking to 'em. D'ye hear?'

'I hear,' replied Aaron. 'I'll tell him what you say.'

'I don't deny,' said Mr. Bowling, stumbling along the road in spite of Aaron's assisting hand, and threatening every instant to pitch upon his nose—'I don't deny it weighs upon me. I don't pretend to think as I've been treated fair.'

'Of course you don't!' cried Aaron, in a stifled voice which he tried in vain to make natural. 'I say, what a downy chap you are! You knew he sent me, didn't you? It was no use my trying to draw the feather over *your* eyes—was it?'

'Not much,' said Mr. Bowling. 'I knowed who sent you, right enough.'

'Of course you did,' said Aaron, with his head whirling. 'There wasn't anybody else to send me. Was there?'

'Who should there be?' They went on along the darkened lane in silence for a while, but at last Aaron, who was stumbling in his thoughts pretty much as his companion stumbled in his footsteps, caught a sudden inspiration.

'I say,' he began, jerking at Mr. Bowling's arm. 'He's close, isn't he? He doesn't let anybody know the latitude and longitude, does he? But he's got a memorandum somewhere. Eh? I wonder where he keeps it.'

'Pump away, all hands!' cried Mr. Bowling, with a violent hiccough. He stopped short in his walk once more, and after two or three wandering attempts to grip Aaron, succeeded, and, holding him by the shoulders with both hands, brought himself to an uncertain anchorage. 'You tell him,' he said thickly, 'as you asked me that. You tell him as you put it cunning. And then you tell him as all I says was "Pump away, all hands!" Just you tell him that. And mind you,' he added, with a weighty solemnity, 'it was while I was intox—intoxicalery—I can't say that—but while I was the worse for liquor. You tell him.'

'I'll tell him,' returned Aaron. 'Ah! you're a cunning fellow.' He ventured to thrust a playful finger at Mr. Bowling's chest, but the action was so ill-received that he repented it. 'No, no,' he

cried, in answer to the staggering demonstrations of war upon which his companion entered. 'You don't want to fight with me. Why, I may turn out to be one of the best friends you ever had.'

'Very well then,' responded Mr. Bowling, suffering himself to be appeased. 'Don't you lay a hand on me no more.'

Aaron promised, and they went on again together, but from that point there was no more to be got out of Mr. Bowling, who, having decided upon his formula, stuck to it with a parrot-like pertinacity, and greeted all hints and inquiries with a hiccupped injunction to all hands to pump. Recognising the impossibility of going further at that time, Aaron bade him good-night at the corner of the lane which led to Bache's farm, and pursued his own thoughtful way homewards.

So Job Round was mixed up, after all, in this story of Tom Bowling's. Well, it was hardly likely that he would let such a secret perish with him. It was hardly likely, indeed, that he would allow the treasure forever to lie idle. Aaron cudgelled his brains to guess why it should have been left so long, and at last he believed himself to have lighted on the truth. It was likely enough, argued Aaron, that at first, and whilst the rumour of the existence of the treasure was still abroad, it had been too dangerous to attempt to transport it. Then, within a year or two of the time, Job Round had come back home, and had been married. He had very likely been looking forward to a return, when his wife died and he was left alone with his daughter on his hands. Everybody knew how he was wrapped up in Sarah. He would not leave his child behind him, and it was the height of absurdity to suppose that he could have taken her with him upon such an expedition. As for the declaration Mr. Bowling had made in Job's own presence, to the effect that Job had never had the courage to go—that might be dismissed at once. Aaron, though not a courageous man himself, was convinced that there were few things in the world which could frighten Job Round, and before he slept that night he had arrived at a comfortable conclusion. The likeliest thing was that when Sarah was once fairly married, Job would set off once more upon his travels, with an object which only himself and Aaron—with, perhaps, Mr. Bowling—would be aware of. He would bring back the money, and his daughter would inherit it.

With these happy reflections, Aaron, after some hours of excited

tossing to and fro, contrived to sleep. He dreamed, and it was not unnatural that he should dream, of buried treasure. He found himself in a valley, surrounded on all sides by vast hills, and something led him to the place where the gold had been hidden. He dug and dug, without ceasing, for many years it seemed, and at last he came upon a huge flat stone with a ring in it. When he had seized the ring and had raised the stone, which came up from its bed as light as a feather in his hands, he saw a vault where golden coins lay piled in vast heaps, shining like the sun. He leaped in, and handled the glittering heaps, and with a clang, everything went dark. The stone had fallen back into its place, and he was powerless to remove it.

He awoke in a cold sweat of dread, and with the clanging noise still in his ears. In the morning he discovered that an obscure old oil painting, which had hung upon his bedroom wall, had fallen to the floor, and so made the noise which awakened him. But for that accident the dream would have been altogether of good omen. But, as everybody knows, the falling of a picture is of itself a sign of ill-fortune.

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## CHAPTER V.

WHEN we were little people, and credulous, we believed, because our elders told us, that good people were always happy, and wicked people always miserable; that an approving conscience was a shield against all possible misconstruction, suspicion, and wrongfully inflicted suffering, and that conscience itself was a monitor altogether divine—a warning voice, whose warnings were never to be silenced or perverted. Perhaps these beliefs were good for us. It would certainly be an admirable thing if everybody could retain them, with eyes open and intelligence awake. But that moral Utopia of childhood, with many other things as desirable as itself, has crumbled and decayed. We have seen the righteous forsaken, and the children of the good man wanting bread. We have met happy rascals whose vitals were gnawn by no cankerworm of reproach, and who had no more trouble with their consciences than they had with their nerves. We have met people by the score whose consciences approved them in malice and hatred, in the swindling devices of trades, in countless meannesses and trickeries.

It is noticeable, however, that there is a sort of grown-up person for whom the world is still governed on the principle of that childish Utopia of the copybooks. This sort of grown-up person is not, as might at first thought be supposed, the most innocent of men or women, the most amiable or the most trustful. General Coningham, for an example, held to these beliefs, and would have thought poorly of the man who presumed to contradict them.

In his middle age, General Coningham took to religion; for he had come into what money there was in his family, and had outlived some of his youthful tastes. He was a hard, high Tory, because he thought that all low-bred people ought to be kept in their places, and made to respect their pastors and masters. He was a Christian, because the Church, as he understood it, was on the respectable Tory side. His religion and his politics were mixed of verjuice and oppression, and he was profoundly contented with his own spiritual flavours and his own mental attitude. To doubt his own conscience would have been as bad as to doubt the Scriptures, and that, of course, would have been blasphemy—a sin from which General Coningham was made safe by the fact that he neither studied them nor cared about them. He knew that conscience was the divine guide, and he followed his conscience, or, at least, he and his conscience were always to be found on the same track.

He reviewed the whole of his association with Job Round (for he had not the faintest doubt left in his mind of the new enemy's identity with the old one), and he was perfectly contented with himself from start to finish. A recruit had been represented to him as having with him a dangerous brute of a dog, with which he would not part. A clear infringement of military rule. A barrack square would be a singular spectacle if every private were allowed to keep a dog about him. He had ordered the dog to be killed, and the owner of the dog had knocked him down and deserted. Assault of a superior officer and desertion are without question the most serious of military crimes. The criminal had been captured and his dog with him. Captain Coningham had poisoned the dog, and his conscience absolutely approved of the action. After more than a quarter of a century that blackguard act looked like a virtue still. The criminal had again assaulted him—the criminal a second time had succeeded in escaping, before a twentieth part, or indeed a thousandth part, of his punishment had been

inflicted. General Coningham told himself, with perfect truth, that after the expiry of all this time he would have denounced the offender under any given conditions, though another and not himself had been the object of his violence.

So much for the old account. Now for the new. The Warren Leasowes had not within human memory been common lands, and he had taken the trouble to discover that even so far back as the reign of Edward the Confessor they had been held by a private owner. To his mind that fact morally justified any owner of the lands in withdrawing a privilege which had been voluntarily extended by himself or others, and could never have been originally claimed by the populace as a right. He withdrew the privilege, and the insolent commonalty of Castle Barfield dared to bring force against him. One vulgar old person insolently refused to cease his trespass. He had that insolent old person ejected, and for that his son had actually had the daring to offer him—him, General Coningham—physical violence.

In this General Coningham recognised the hand of Providence. Some people may find it difficult to believe, but the General had no doubts. It was Providence which had brought Ezekiel to his fields; it was Providence which had inspired the deserter with the mad presumption with which he had behaved; it was Providence which had enabled General Coningham to recognise him after so great a lapse of time. In his unregenerate younger days he would have been impious enough to call it accident, but he knew better now. What changes religion can bring about, to be sure—in a certain order of mind.

When the General went down to a certain old-fashioned military club of which he was a member, he told the story with a careful suppression of names and places, for he would not trust the slightest seed of chance to mar the evident designs of Providence, as it might have done.

‘The fellow,’ he said, ‘has escaped for five-and-twenty years, and now they’ll have him in a day or two.’

‘And what on earth,’ said one, ‘do you suppose they’ll do with him? Upon my word, the man’s time of service having long expired, I doubt whether they have the legal right to lay a hand upon him. I don’t know, for the position’s new to me, and I never met a parallel case.’

Coningham’s face flushed crimson, and then paled.

‘Do you mean to tell me, Colonel Alured, that you doubt the



power of the military law to punish an offence of that nature? Why, sir, you propose to pardon the offence because the offence succeeds, and that, to my mind, is its aggravation.'

'Well, now,' said Colonel Alured, who was a red-faced man with white whiskers, and a mingled look of good sense and good nature; 'suppose the right of arrest exists, what do you think they'll do with the man? If I understand you rightly, he has the second half of a flogging to get, and then two years' imprisonment. After that he is to be tried for a new offence, which will be more than seven-and-twenty years old at the time of trial. If I were the man he had assaulted I should let him go. I've known the service now for five-and-forty years, Coninghame, and I never knew a man strike an officer who was a decent sort of fellow. It's always your cantankerous, meddling fellow, who gets hated by the men, who ever finds a private to break out with him. I give you that as my experience. And he must be a nasty beggar, you know, or he wouldn't have the heart to pull the poor devil up again after all this length of time. You see his present action goes to prove what manner of man he was.'

'Perhaps,' said Coninghame, 'it is almost time I should tell you that I am the officer whose conduct and character you are giving yourself the trouble to describe.'

'Oh!' returned the other, with a cool stare, after his first expression of astonishment. 'Of course I'm devilish sorry, you know, and all that sort of thing.' And he began immediately to read the paper he had laid in his lap to listen to Coninghame's story. 'Gad!' said Colonel Alured, when he told the story afterwards, 'I wish I knew where the poor beggar was. I'd give him warning to look out, and a fiver to get away with.' The knot of officers to whom he spoke concurred with him.

'I didn't catch the case at first,' said one, 'but I recall it now. Hudson—Chowpack Hudson, you know—was on the court-martial. He told me all about it. Said the prisoner was a fine young fellow, gentlemanly fellow, and must have been awfully attached to the dog. Some fellows do get attached to dogs. I do. Uncle of mine shot a dog of mine. Perfect accident of course. Very favourite old bitch she was, and upon my word I was pretty nearly fit to cry at the time.' The gallant officer looked a little ashamed of himself, and hastened on. 'That's years ago, and I was a bit soft-hearted as a lad. But about this fellow, now, I remember very well—the general opinion was that everybody was well out of it

when he gave 'em leg-bail. They *had* to be severe, don't you see? if they had him.'

Job's chances formed a fruitful theme for discussion in London military circles. Some gentlemen, like Colonel Alured, doubted whether a court-martial had power to take cognisance of an offence so far removed by time. Others were certain that no limitation of time existed theoretically or practically, but most men thought it a difficult and perplexing case, and the news of the arrest was awaited with considerable curiosity. Nobody thought the better of Coningham for pursuing so stale a vengeance, but then Coningham had never been popular, and actions of his performance were blamed often enough when another man would have been praised for them.

But Coningham enjoyed that happy state of mind which is the reward conferred by a good conscience. He was bringing a criminal to justice, performing an act of public utility (so he said and thought, though it is a little difficult to see it), and was delighting himself at the same time. To be severely virtuous, and in the same act to have your enemy upon the hip; is to taste a joy known to few.

In spite, however, of his sustaining sense of duty, and the personal pleasure he enjoyed in the prospect of its performance, the ten or twelve days which intervened between his departure from Castle Barfield and his first news of Job Round passed somewhat drearily. He sat in his own room in the hotel he stayed at, and looked out of window, biting at his nails, when a waiter tapped at the door, and being told to enter presented an envelope on a salver. The General took the envelope, opened it and drew from it a card—an ordinary visiting card—on glancing at which he smiled.

'Show the—ah—gentleman here,' he said. The waiter retired, and after the passage of a minute or two came back ushering into General Coningham's room a man with a languid manner, an air of self-possession which verged on insolence, and a curiously quick and observant eye. This gentleman was dressed in irreproachable black, was clean shaven, and wore a white scarf with a small diamond pin.

'Mr. Latazzi?' said the General, when the door was closed and the waiter had departed.

'At your service, sir,' said the new-comer. Mr. Latazzi was more like Mr. Walker than one man was ever like another in this world.

'Ah!' said Coningham. 'Take a seat, sir.' He spoke with great frigidity, for he could not help remembering that he was a gentleman and a man of unblemished honour, whilst the person before him was a spy whose base services were to be sold to anybody for money. 'You have completed your investigations?'

'I regret,' said Mr. Latazzi, 'that I was abroad when you called to offer me this little commission, sir. I got back from Paris on the following day, and seeing that it was likely to be a matter of some difficulty and delicacy, I resolved not to entrust it to a subordinate, but to undertake it myself.'

'I am very much obliged to you,' returned the General, still frigid with the sense of his own unblemished honour.

'I have been actually engaged ten days,' said Mr. Latazzi. 'Ten days' personal service, fifty-two pounds ten; retaining-fee ten guineas; sixty-three pounds in all. I have to return you thirty-seven pounds, sir.' Producing a pocket-book he counted out seven five-pound notes, and then drew forth a purse from which with gloved thumb and finger he extracted a couple of sovereigns. 'I have reduced the result of my inquiry to writing.' He drew a legal-looking packet from his breast-pocket—folded blue foolscap tied round with red-tape—and handed it to his client with a bow.

The client took it gingerly, and his aristocratic nostrils betrayed a little sensation of disgust, such as a man of delicate honour would be likely to experience on coming into contact with a person of Mr. Latazzi's profession.

'Perhaps,' said the private detective, 'it may be more convenient to you if I stay until you have read through my report. You may have some questions to ask.'

'Take a seat, sir,' said the General a second time; but Mr. Latazzi seemed to prefer to stand. He wandered about the room looking at the pictures on the walls, and Coningham having straightened the papers, sent his delicate fingers twinkling about the bosom of his black frock coat until they found his gold-rimmed folding-glasses. These he polished deliberately with the skirt of his coat, and then settling them on his nose, sank back into an arm-chair with a smile and began to read.

Mr. Latazzi had paused with some seeming of interest before an engraving in a darkish corner. This engraving hung aslant from the wall, as engravings generally do, and, as engravings commonly are, it was faced with a clear sheet of glass. Mr.

Latazzi, like the engraving, was in the shadow, and General Coningham, in order to read with ease, had taken up the most brilliantly lighted position in the room. The glass reflected him with absolute clearness without reflecting the gentleman who feigned to examine the work behind it. This was why Mr. Latazzi preferred it to the mirror, which as he knew by experience was likely to betray the most guarded watchfulness. In the course of his professional experience Mr. Latazzi had found such trifles as this of use to him. He used it now less because he wanted it than because a habit of foxlike vigilance had grown habitual to him.

When he had watched a little while he saw General Coningham start and shift in his chair. Then he saw him turn back a leaf and begin to read it again. Next the General looked up with a frowning forehead in the direction of the unconscious Latazzi, who was examining the darkened engraving with his head on one side.

‘Mr. Latazzi,’ said the General, ‘I do not quite understand this. There is an obvious error in the date.’

‘I think not,’ returned Mr. Latazzi, tranquilly marching across the room. ‘Permit me.’ He took the papers from Coningham’s fingers. ‘Quite right, sir.’

‘The man left home in ’33,’ said Coningham.

‘In ’35, sir,’ replied Mr. Latazzi.

‘I tell you, sir,’ the General answered in icy anger, ‘that the events upon which I desired you to base your inquiry took place in 1833.’

‘As you please, sir,’ said Mr. Latazzi coolly. ‘My instructions were to ascertain all that could be known of the man’s history. There is all that can be known.’

‘You tell me that this man first left Castle Barfield in the year 1835?’ demanded Coningham, rising.

‘He never spent a week out of Castle Barfield in his life, so far as I can learn, until the summer of that year.’ Mr. Latazzi was perfectly quiet and under his own control. He was not angry at being doubted, he was apparently not surprised at being doubted.

‘You can learn but very little, sir,’ said Coningham bitterly. ‘This man enlisted on the fifteenth day of June, 1833, and deserted on the twenty-second. On the sixteenth of July he was captured in London. On the third of September he was tried by court-martial in Dublin, and on the fifth October he escaped from the hospital. For nearly four months I can trace the man’s

whereabouts, and you, who profess to be a private detective, bring me this barren story.'

'Wait a moment, if you please,' said Mr. Latazzi. 'You assume that these two men are the same, you see. Now it so happens that I have definitely proved that they are not.'

'Not the same?' cried General Coningham. 'I know the man. I swear to him. I—I am prepared to swear to him. As a Christian and a gentleman I am prepared to pledge my oath.'

'Ah!' replied Mr. Latazzi, 'that doesn't make any difference, you see. If you'll take the trouble to read on you'll find I've traced 'em both.'

General Coningham's head began to reel, and he had to sit down again, for fear of falling.

'Both?' he stammered.

'Both,' returned Mr. Latazzi. 'John Smith, identical with John Wybrow, son of the landlord of the "Shoulder of Mutton," at Haydon Hey, ten miles from Castle Barfield. Father bred a particular breed of bulldogs, famous in the district. Son quarrelled with father, left home, date uncertain, but as near as can be fixed, in April 1833. Took with him valuable dog, his own property; local prize taken, well known, name Pincher. Not heard of again until two or three years after, when he wrote from Liverpool stating that he had obtained a situation in New York and was going out to it. Since then no news of him. Supposed to have been lost at sea.'

When he began this history Mr. Latazzi produced a book of memoranda, and referring to its pages, dropped one by one the items of the information he had gathered.

'You will find it all set down there, sir, at some length, though I have spared you the unnecessary details. This hasn't been at all a profitable piece of business for me, but you'll find it has been pretty thoroughly done, for all that.'

'I knew the man,' said Coningham, with a lingering obstinacy. 'I could have sworn to him.'

'After five-and-twenty years it is a difficult thing to swear to a man,' replied Mr. Latazzi.

'How do I know that you are not in collusion with the man?' cried the General, rising, in a passionate flush of certainty in his own first opinion. 'I'll swear to the fellow. I know him to be the same.'

'Very well, sir,' replied the detective with phlegmatic dignity.

'I have received from you in payment for the service for which you engaged me the sum of sixty-three pounds.' He drew out the pocket-book from which he had already counted out the seven bank-notes, and deliberately laid thirteen others by the side of them. Then he slipped the two loose sovereigns into his waistcoat pocket. 'You dispute my right to receive this,' he went on, 'and in effect you challenge me with having obtained it by fraud. Under those circumstances, sir, you compel me to recover this money by legal means. I shall be pleased to hear you renew the accusations you have made against me here in open court.'

With this he walked to the other end of the room for his hat and cane.

'Nonsense!' cried General Coninghame. 'You were paid in advance. I decline to touch the money.'

'Very well, sir,' said Mr. Latazzi, 'that is as you please. You touch my professional probity, sir, and you touch all I have. My sole object in proceeding against you will be to secure an open hearing for these charges.'

'Charges!' repeated Coninghame petulantly; 'I make no charges.'

'I beg your pardon, sir,' replied the detective, who really contrived for the moment to look the more dignified of the two; 'you make a very serious charge against me, a charge under which I cannot consent to labour. How am I to know that that charge will not be repeated in quarters where it will be of the gravest injury to me? This charge shall be made, sir, in public, or it shall be withdrawn in public.'

'There's your money, sir,' snarled the General. He would not for a hundred thousand pounds have had the story of his fruitless employment of Mr. Latazzi known, and Mr. Latazzi guessed as much. 'Your money lies there on the table. You may take it and begone.'

'No, sir,' answered Mr. Latazzi, with a touch almost of gentle pathos. 'I cannot accept the money whilst this charge remains unwithdrawn.'

'I make no charge,' said Coninghame. Latazzi bowed and moved towards the door, but paused halfway.

'May I understand, sir,' he said, 'that you are perfectly satisfied with my manner of conducting this inquiry, and that you cast no doubt upon my honour?'

General Coninghame was not the man to withdraw gracefully,

but he snapped a 'Yes' in answer to this inquiry, and added 'Perfectly' and 'Exactly,' and 'Of course,' with a manner expressive of bitter irritation.

'I am obliged to you, sir,' said Mr. Latazzi. 'The expression was the result of a momentary annoyance?'

The General grunted, and Mr. Latazzi counted up his thirteen banknotes, again restored them to his pocket-book, laid the two sovereigns beside the remaining notes upon the table, and turned once more to his client.

'Pray oblige me, sir, by seeing that this is correct.'

Coningham pushed the notes apart with the tips of his fingers as if he were reluctant to touch them.

'Quite correct,' he said. 'Good day, Mr. Latazzi.'

Mr. Latazzi withdrew with a cordial response, and the General sat down with the papers in his hand and tapped savagely with his foot upon the floor.

'I was right,' he muttered to himself. 'I knew the man. I am not mistaken. John Smith and Job Round are one and the same person. I will see to this myself.'

The very next morning the village of Haydon Hey was aware of an aristocratic-looking stranger, who walked its principal street and looked about him with an air of inquiry. The stranger ventured down a by-street or two, and his movements were a source of speculation to the populace. When he had rambled for some time he stopped an elderly police-officer.

'Officer.'

'Yes, sir,' said the policeman, recognising something military in the stranger's aspect, and touching the peak of his shiny cap to it.

'Direct me to the "Shoulder of Mutton" Inn.'

'Can't do that, sir,' returned the policeman. 'It's been pulled down this ten or twelve years.' The stranger's visage, which had perceptibly lightened at the first part of the officer's reply, perceptibly darkened at the second.

'There was such a place then?' he asked. 'Was it here five or six-and-twenty years ago?'

'Yes, sir. Very old house, sir. Very old house indeed.'

'Do you remember who kept it?'

'Yes, sir. A John Wybrow. The Wybrows are gone, sir, kith and kin. Not a soul of 'em left.'

'Ah!' The stranger stood with a thoughtful frown and



flicked at the pebbles in the road with his cane. 'Are you an old inhabitant here?'

'Yes, sir. Born here, sir. Served my country abroad, sir, though.'

'Do you happen to know if this Wybrow had a son who ran away from home five-and-twenty years ago?'

'Why yes, sir, I heard he had when I came back again. Is there any news of him, sir? Excuse me, but what makes me ask is, there was another gentleman down here some days back making very particular inquiries about him, sir.'

'I had particular reasons for inquiring,' said the stranger. He drew a purse from his pocket, bestowed a fourpenny-piece which he sought with some pains amongst a little pile of silver, on the officer, and walked leisurely to the railway station. He had arrived from Birmingham, and he booked for Castle Barfield.

If General Coningham had held any clue beyond the mere suspicion which his own personal certainty of Job Round gave him, he might have reflected that it was not difficult within ten miles of Castle Barfield to discover an old story of a young man who ran away from home. He might have thought that a gentleman of Mr. Latazzi's profession and experience would, in the event of his having a double game to play, take care to play it pretty closely.

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## CHAPTER VI.

CASTLE BARFIELD had settled back into its normal tranquillity. The battle of the right of way had been fought and won, and the enemy showed no appetite for a renewal of the struggle. For a time people who had never before been in the habit of walking through the Warren Leasowes, directed all their strolls that way, and on fine Sunday afternoons in especial there was to be seen a long procession of Castle Barfield folk leisurely promenading the recovered pathway, but by-and-by the place lost its fascination, and General Coningham's privacy was no more disturbed than it would have been if he had never made his ill-judged effort to exclude the people altogether. The General meditated a retirement from the Warren, and Armstrong, looking daily over the advertisement columns of the *Times*, saw the place announced for sale. The present proprietor had resolved to take up his residence abroad, so said the advertisement, and Armstrong had never been

more sincerely thankful in his life than he felt on reading that statement.

The grey man had never known by what means his obstinate son-in-law had got rid of Mr. Walker. To have bought off that dangerous spy was the most humiliating thing to which Job had ever found himself compelled. He had been tied to the triangles and flogged, but it was not in him to feel that as a humiliation. That came from without, and irresistible physical force constrained him. He rebelled against it with more than fire enough, and it was that which had thrown him as a prey into the wicked hands of Monsieur Bonaventure. It was not a thing over which to feel humiliated, but a thing to be revenged. The purchase of safety at the hands of Mr. Walker was his own act and deed, but no earthly consideration except Sarah's happiness would have had a straw's weight with him in persuasion to it, and even with that exigent influence behind him, he felt the transaction shameful and revolting. He drew some satisfaction from its very bitterness, for, in Job's uncompromising theology, a certain sum of human misery was to be exacted for a certain sum of wrongdoing, and the more he himself suffered, the less Sarah would have to suffer. God was cruel, but, on His own stern lines, was just, and would exact no tittle beyond His proper payment of revenge.

So Job learned to welcome his own self-abasement for his daughter's sake, and treasured even the agony of his own remorse and fears as being set on the right side in the awful ledger.

Aaron came more and more assuredly as the weeks went on, and Job grew more accustomed to hope well of him. The young man was always a shade too smooth and acquiescent for his prospective father-in-law's taste, but Job admitted that he seemed devoted to Sarah, and that he stuck to his new concerns with an admirable assiduity.

It was winter time, the sacred season was near at hand, and Job and Sarah were seated in the little sitting-room of the cottage, with Armstrong for sole visitor at present. The fire burned brightly, the drawn curtains and the mellow lamp gave the room a snug and cosy air, and the white and gold china tea-set sparkled on the table, which was laid for four. Sarah wore an expectant air, and was caught now and then in the act of listening for a step outside. She took her share of the talk, but lost the thread of it at times, and was inclined to be restless and even fidgety. But at last the latch of the gate clicked, the

hinges shrieked, the gate clashed back into its place, and a step sounded on the gravel. Sarah ran to open the door and welcome her sweetheart.

Aaron entered beaming and bustling, and shook hands all round. Sarah took from him his hat and great-coat, and hung them on a peg in a little dark passage between the front room and the kitchen, and, being in the dark and safe from observation, she kissed the cuff of the great-coat before she left it hanging there.

'You're a bit late, Mr. Whittaker,' said Job.

'I am, sir,' returned Aaron, smoothly; 'but I couldn't very well help it. I've been detained at the mine. We have come upon coal, sir. I've brought a bit with me.' He stepped into the little darkened passage, and, encountering Sarah there, gave her a silent kiss, and then, feeling for his overcoat, drew from one of the pockets a small brown-paper parcel. Returning with this to the sitting-room, he opened it, and revealed a shining lump of coal, of about a pound in weight. 'Good stuff, sir,' he said, holding it out to Job.

'Ay,' said he. 'It looks all right.'

'We're going to make a good thing of it, sir,' said Aaron. 'It's worth a thousand pounds an acre, all expenses paid.'

'Ah!' Job answered. 'Who says so?'

'That's Morley's estimate,' said Aaron. Morley was the mine surveyor, but the estimate was Aaron's own. 'Look here, Miss Round. That's the first piece out of the solid in the new mine. I cut it out,' he added in an undertone, 'with my own hands, to show you. It'll be worth a thousand pounds an acre.'

'Can I keep it?' asked Sarah. Aaron nodded, with a gratified smile, and she ran away upstairs to lock the black memento in one of her own drawers. She would have been just as well pleased had Aaron said that it was going to be worth a thousand pence an acre as she was when he told her it was going to be worth a thousand pounds. The money meant nothing to her, but if Aaron were going to be prosperous, of course she was delighted.

It does not say much for Aaron, perhaps, that as a matter of fact this precious souvenir, which Sarah had just triumphantly locked away, came from his mother's coal-shed. It may be urged in his excuse that he actually had cut out a piece of something which deserved to be called coal, from the floor of the new mine, and that, contrasting and comparing it with the sample of the local

supply to be found at home, had come to the conclusion that the quality of his own find was hardly as high as it might have been. He had dropped the morsel, therefore, and had picked up another piece, by purposed accident, in the place of it, and, being a born liar, had almost persuaded himself by this time that he had picked up the original fragment. Nay, such a piece of work is a man (when he is built on the lines of Aaron Whittaker), that the young man's prospective thousand pounds an acre had come to be almost as real a thing to him, with much talking of it, as if it were already earned and entered to his credit at the bank.

'I'm in treaty for a piece of property, Mr. Round,' said Aaron, when they were all four seated at the tea-table, 'and I'm having plans prepared for building a house upon it.'

This, like the thousand pounds an acre, had been one of Aaron's day-dreams for some months past, and when the thousand pounds an acre had been realised, he meant to translate it into fact.

'M—m,' said Job, sipping at his tea. 'And where do you think of building?'

Fortunately for young Mr. Whittaker, he had already decided on his *locale*, and was able to reply without embarrassment.

'Isn't the spot rather exposed?' asked Armstrong.

'Well, it is a little exposed towards the east,' replied Aaron; 'but I think of planting at the back.'

He was the only child of a widowed mother, who was known to be well-to-do, and neither Job nor Armstrong had any reason to doubt him. One must either be a liar oneself, like the gentleman in the story, or have had experience of a young man who can lie, with no purpose, with Aaron's fluency, before one can feel suspicious of him. He had a way of running before things, of counting for the moment with actual certainty on the future. If anybody had told him he was a liar, he would have been bitterly and naturally indignant. Perhaps within himself he might have admitted that this habit of forestalling the future was not quite consistent with a strict veracity, but an outsider would have had no right to that opinion.

'You haven't actually bought it yet?' said Job.

'Not exactly,' replied Aaron, lightly. 'But it's almost as good as done.'

'Let me see,' said Job. 'Who's the owner?'

Aaron had scalded himself with his tea, and could not reply

for the moment. Armstrong happened to know, and came unconsciously to the young man's rescue.

'What's he want for it?' Job asked, when he had learned the owner's name.

'We're standing off a little about the price,' answered Aaron airily. 'He wants a couple of hundred more than I feel inclined to give him.'

The talk drifted to other matters, and the young man bore his part in it until tea was over. Then, after the manner of the household, Sarah cleared away with her own hands, and retired to the kitchen to wash up the tea-things. Aaron slid out after her, and did a little courtship, whilst the two elders drew near the fire, and lit their pipes.

'Hear to the wind and the rain, Job,' said Armstrong, after a pause. 'There's an odd sort of human distress in the sound of it. It's like Sterne's starling, with the difference that it wants to get in, in place of wanting to get out. D'ye hear it? "I can't get in—I can't get in," says the wind and the rain.'

Job grunted an assent, and sat smoking, staring at the fire, and listening. By-and-by he took up the parable at the point to which his own thoughts had carried it.

'One can't wonder that ignorance is superstitious,' he said. 'Go where you will, the world's full of voices.'

'Have ye any sort o' faith in ghosts, Job?' demanded Armstrong. 'I'm not thinking of a hollow illuminated turnip on a stick, with a bit of a sheet depending from it. I'm scarcely thinking of a visible ghost at all, I fancy. But sometimes, when ye're alone and thinking, did y'e'ver have the sense that somebody was near ye in the spirit?'

'Nerves,' said Job curtly, still staring at the fire, and pulling slowly at his pipe.

'Maybe,' returned the Scot. 'And maybe something more than nerves. Science is a grand thing, Job, but it's young, and, like most young things, it's inclined, if ye give it its way overmuch, to be headlong, and a wee bit tyrannical. "Get awa' oot o' the hoose, feyther," says young Science. "I'll dooms soon fetch the old rubbish heap down." And, says old Civilisation, "Bide awhile, lad. There's a thing or two I'd like to carry away with me." Ye see, Job, lad,' the old man continued, looking mildly at his son-in-law between his eyebrows and his glasses, 'ye try to kill one wonder with another. I say "A spiritual

presence," and y'answer "Nerves." Man alive, the human economy's as wonderful and as little understandable as anything in the whole procession of ghostly things.'

'Ay, ay,' said Job, 'everything's wonderful. There's no end to wonder.' He sat looking seriously at the fire, with his face half in shadow and half in the dusky glow of the steady firelight.

'But that young Jackanapes they call Science tells ye he's found the end to it. He's a fine lad, a fine lad, but cock-a-whoop, and over certain for his years.'

'What set you on this tack, sir?' asked Job, still staring into the fire. 'You don't believe in ghosts?'

'It was the night's noises that set me thinking,' the old man responded. 'As for believing in ghosts, that's a hard thing to say yes or no to. Say yes, without reserve, and ye may as well stick straws in your hair and set up a private Bedlam out of hand at once. Say no, without reserve, and ye may shut yourself out of more than it's easy to guess of. Ye've heard of these new table-turning, spirit-rapping gentry that draw Burns and Shakespeare out of their heavenly contemplations, and set them knocking double knocks like the ghosts of a pair of demented postmen? They'll knock a while before they knock faith into me. Burns wanders by the heavenly brooks, lad, in heavenly solitudes, and just ance in a while a seraph passes him, and sees a song in the air. And as for Shakespeare, he sits in the middle of a silent ring, and the mighty thoughts just float out of him, and the audience sees and hears. Eh, lad, that pair's got better work on hand than the nightly staggering of noodles at five pounds a head.' He paused, with a little laugh at himself. 'All these are facts, lad,' he added, with his customary look of dry humour.

It was Job who renewed the theme.

'You think,' he said, 'that the dead know us—that they want sometimes to get near us.'

'Why not?' answered Armstrong. 'Ye know "The Age of Reason"?' Job nodded, without looking at him. 'Poor Paine's notion was that all the worlds are inhabited, but it's as likely as not we'll have separate heavens. Ye'd be a bit ill at ease at first with a man out o' Saturn or Jupiter. I'm thinking the human interest may endure, and that maybe a soul that's lived in flesh upon this planet has no liking for strange ground. And ye can fancy even the happiest spirit asking the master-seraph for a

holiday. "I beg your pardon, my lord, but I've been behaving myself fairly of late, and I'd like to get away back to Castle Barfield for an hour, and have a look at the husband and the little girl." And ye can fancy the permission being given. Ye can fancy, too, that it's a little hard to be doubted and denied when they do come. "Here's your poor dead mother's soul come to see ye." And then says the flesh-clothed soul, "Nerves," and tries to chase his poor old mother with a decoction o' Peruvian bark.'

'No,' said Job, after a lengthy pause, 'I can't believe it. The things of this world are mercifully hidden. How if the pure mother comes back to find her little girl a painted drab on the town streets, or her son a murderer—the little lad she nursed?'

'Eh!' said Armstrong softly, 'but who knows but, if she could come, she'd fetch the poor wench from the mire.'

'They rest from their labours,' said Job. There was so singular a break in his voice that Armstrong cast back his head to look at him through his glasses, but saw no change in his aspect. Job, for a minute or two past, had been toying with the poker, and now he thrust it into the fire, which broke into bright light. His face was as placid as ever, and Armstrong could see it quite plainly. 'There's no reason,' the giant went on, rising to take down his tobacco-pot from the lofty mantel-shelf, and sitting down again to fill his pipe—'there's no reason to believe that the saints are troubled with the concerns of this world, and, for my own part, I should be sorry to believe in any such doctrine. A good man dies, and his son turns out a blackguard. We say it's well he died—that he died in time. To my mind, that speaks the wise view of the case. There are people in heaven now who'd fill the place with wailings if they knew what you and I know. And heaven is no place for wailings.'

'Ah, well!' said Armstrong; 'that's a more convincing argument, to my mind, than nerves.' He knocked out the ashes of his pipe, and Job, in obedience to a gesture of his hand, pushed the tobacco-jar across the table, and then lay back in his chair smoking. They were both silent for awhile, and then said Armstrong, 'In the midst of all the insoluble puzzles the world's filled with, I see nothing for it, Job, for a pair o' sensible men like you and me, but to settle down to a solid game at chess.'

'Come along,' said Job; and five minutes later, Armstrong's



fingers were pattering on the table out of time in accompaniment to his tuneless whistle. The whole tribe of ghosts had disappeared for him out of the economy of nature. Job sat over the board with a thoughtful frown, and played his game solidly and steadily, though his ghosts were thick about him, and would, but for the stony resolution with which he held them off, have flowed in a crowd between his thoughts and himself.

They played for a couple of hours, and in the meantime Aaron and Sarah sat in the next room. Aaron was full of his own wonderful prospects, and, with pen, ink, and paper before him, drew a sketch plan of the visionary house. Sarah did not know a great deal about practical architecture, and though Aaron's house, if it had been built on the lines he showed, would have tumbled inwards with the builders before the roof was on it, she was quite satisfied with the plans; and when her lover gave her the one grain of truth he had to offer, and told her this palace was entirely of his own designing, she thought him the most remarkable and admirable of men. What was there that he could not do? She asked this with the most innocent delight and pride, and Aaron smiled the question on one side with an air of satisfied humility.

'But, Aaron,' said she, 'can you afford to live in such a house?'

'Yes,' he answered, in a sort of tolerant astonishment at her inquiry. 'You don't suppose I should think of building it if I couldn't afford it.' He laughed at her, and pinched her cheek in his own superior way. 'What sort of a head for business do you think I have?' he asked good-humouredly.

She laughed at him admiringly, and, of course, thought him fit to control the exchequer of the United Kingdom.

'I don't mean to exceed my income,' said Aaron. 'A man who lives beyond his income is a foolish fellow. I don't think it's wise even to live up to it, because a man never knows when a rainy day may come, and in all sorts of commercial enterprises, a man's liable to have sudden calls and sudden drains on his resources. But I couldn't live like a miser. I hate a niggardly fellow.' He arose, and, thrusting his hands in his pockets, nodded at her with a good-humoured imperiousness which, in the girl's eyes, became him infinitely well. 'I mean my wife to live in a first-rate house,' he said, 'and to go well-dressed, and have everything handsome about her. Why, there's scarcely

anybody knows what fortunes there are to be made by judicious speculation in this part of the country. I've got two or three things in my mind that I can't speak about yet, for fear of putting other fellows on the track. But I'm not going to have too many irons in the fire. You know the old saying, Sarah,

One thing at a time, and that done well,  
Is a very good thing, as many can tell.'

If her thoughts had given themselves words she would have said with Titania, 'Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.'

'I hate a bragging fellow,' pursued the ingenuous Aaron, 'but I've got my head pretty well screwed on, though I say it that shouldn't, and I'll startle some of these clever people about here before many more years are gone over their heads. They don't know what they're treading on, Sarah. They can't see the wealth that's under their very noses.'

If his boastful vaticinations had had a solid foundation in fact he could scarcely have been happier in making them. And of course Sarah was certain that everything he prophesied was going to come true, and she took him at even more than his own estimate. A woman who is in love lives in a house with tinted windows, and looking on the landscape of her lover's life sees it all rose-colour.

Aaron had a longish walk before him this wintry night, and left a little after ten o'clock. Armstrong took his way also, and father and daughter were left together. Sarah, seeing that Job was in a thoughtful mood, moved about lightly, straightening the room and putting away the chessmen and the board; but when all was done, and she had lit her bedroom candle, she still lingered before bidding him good-night. Job looked up at her suddenly and caught a timid look of half decision on her face.

'Well, lass,' he said, rising and putting an arm about her waist, 'what is it?'

'You think well of—of Aaron, now, don't you, father?'

'I've better hopes, dear,' he answered; 'better hopes. I hope he'll turn out a good man for your sake. Good-night, sweetheart. Run away to bed.'

She answered his good-night kiss, and left him sitting by the fire nursing one knee in his great hands, and already staring absently at the embers. She had not left him long when the ghosts he had held away till then came trooping thick about him.

'Would you care to come in?' he murmured half aloud to one of them. 'Better to hold you at arm's length if I can.' After this murmur he sat in silence for an hour or more. 'You shall have your way,' he said then, and rising he walked upstairs in the dark, and into his own room. The rain and the wind beat dismally at the window, and except for a flickering distant light or two the night was as dark as pitch. He stood to look out at it for a moment only, and then turning away walked with groping hands before him to a chest of drawers which stood in one corner of the room. Having reached the chest he drew a bunch of keys from his pocket and felt for the key he wanted. 'You shall have your way,' he murmured gravely a second time, and having found the key he opened a drawer and took from it a cash-box, with which he returned to the sitting-room.

There he drew his chair to the table, and opening the box reversed it, and shook it so that a double handful of papers strewn themselves about the table-cloth. He went through these carefully, selected from amongst them a little sheaf of documents, picked up one by one, and returned the others to the cash-box, which he locked. Next he arose again, and stirring the fire, which by this time was fading and thickly strewn with grey ashes, he dropped one of the papers and watched it as it flamed, curled, shrivelled, blackened with bright sparks in it, and then turned grey. Then he dropped another and watched its progress to a feathery nothing. Then another and another. When he had dropped them all he spoke.

'The fortune's gone, and God grant the curse goes with it. There was blood on it. Scoundrels? Yes. But their blood was on it all the same. Go back! Go back to your heavenly hymns again, and forget me. You have had your way.'

(To be continued.)



